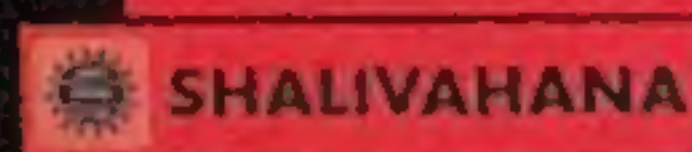
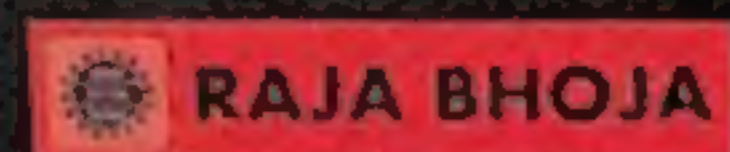
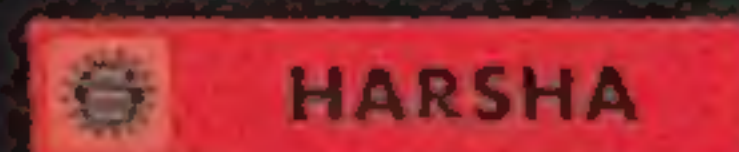
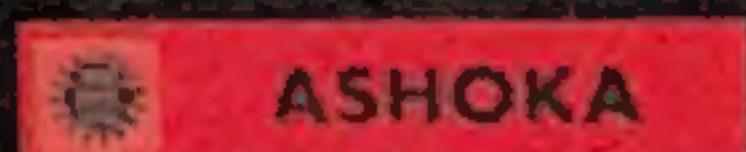


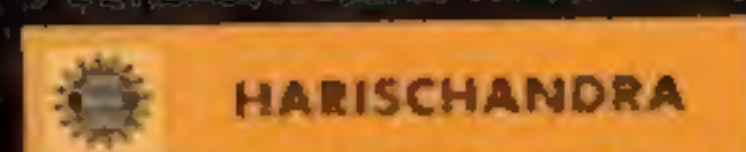
RAJA RAJA CHOLA

Arul Mozhi Varman was the younger son of the king of Thanjavur. Quiet, firm and dependable he won the heart of every person he met. However, it was his hot-headed brother who was heir to the throne. But no one could stand in the way of what destiny had in store for the young prince. By the strangest twists of fate, Arul ascended the throne as Raja Raja Chola, and proved to be one of the greatest rulers in the history of medieval India. During his 30-year-reign the Chola empire not only became a formidable maritime power but was also a hub of art and architecture.

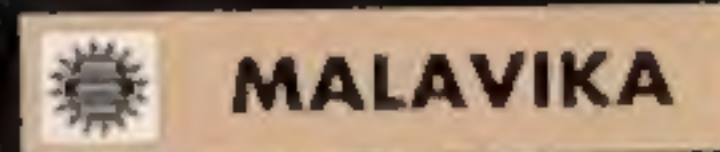
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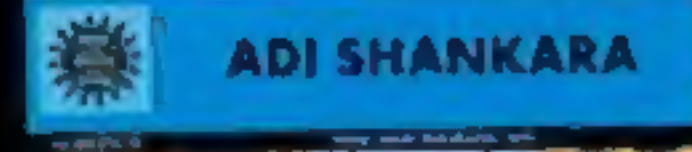
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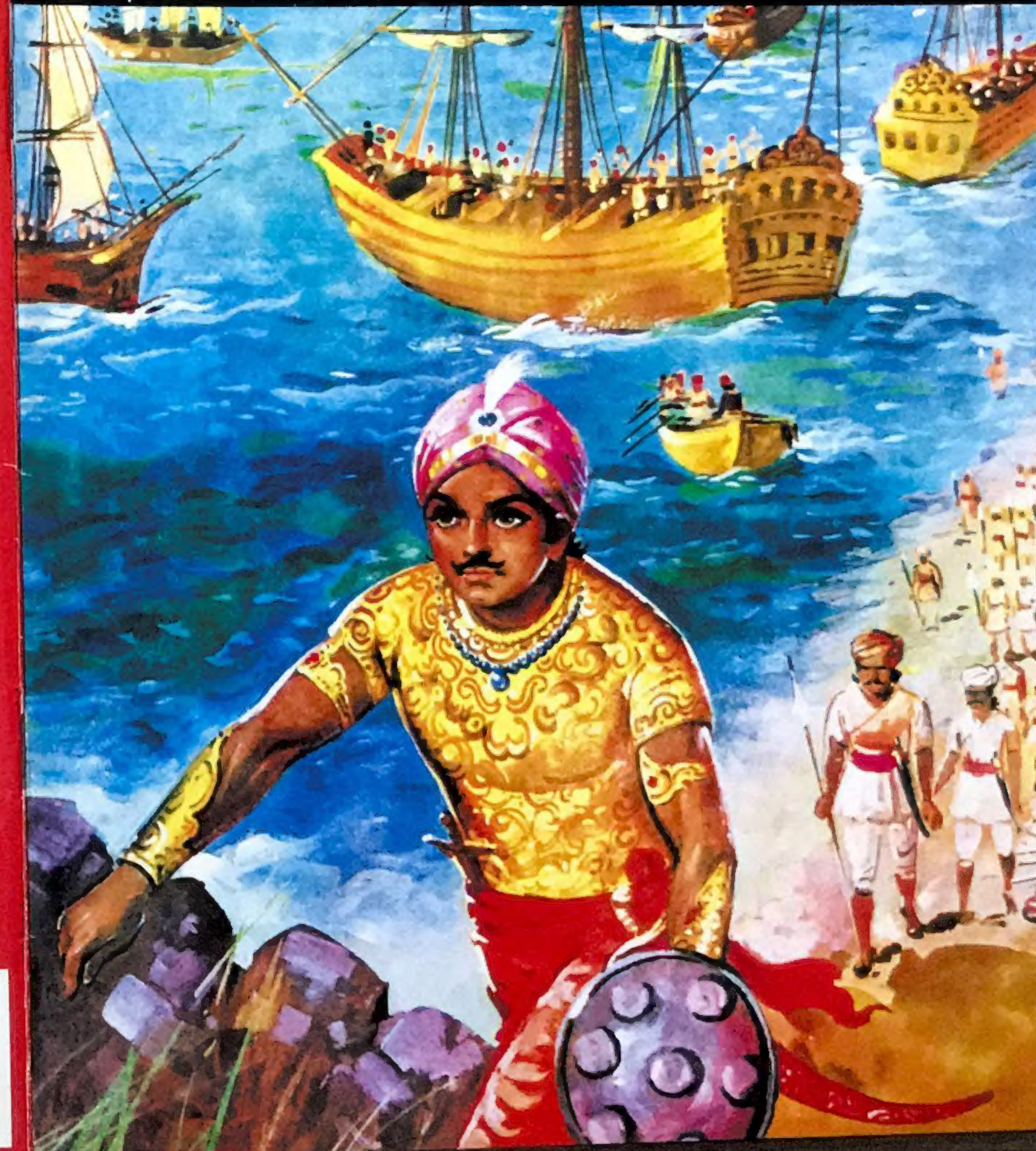
BRAVEHEARTS



RAJA RAJA CHOLA

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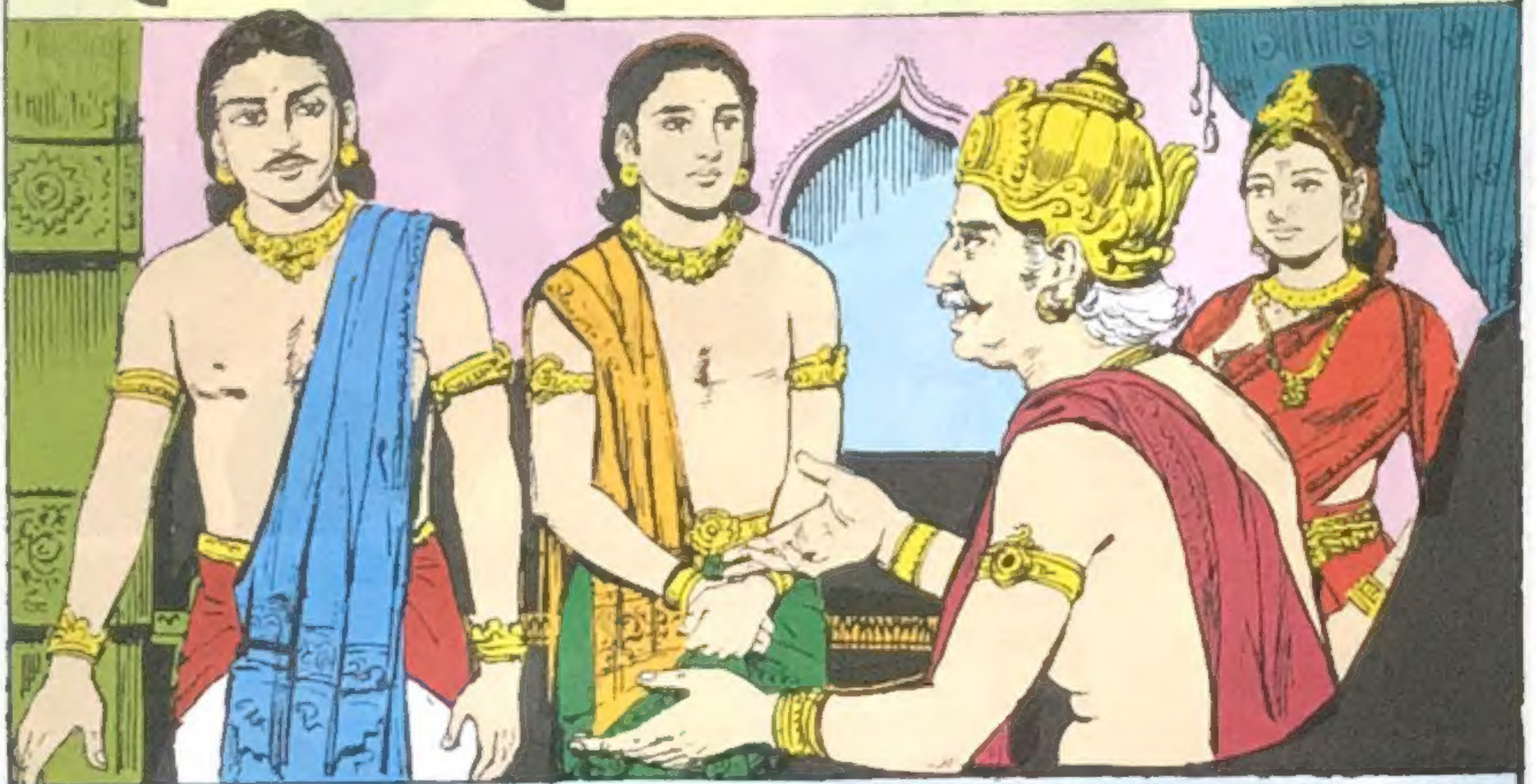


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RAJA RAJA CHOLA



ABOUT A THOUSAND YEARS AGO, PARANTAKA CHOLA II RULED OVER TANJAVUR IN SOUTH INDIA. HE HAD THREE CHILDREN, ADITYA KARIKALAN, ARUL MOZHI VERMAN AND KUNDAVAI.

BOTH KARIKALAN AND KUNDAVAI LOVED THEIR YOUNGER BROTHER.

AH! THERE HE COMES!
HOW WELL HE RIDES!

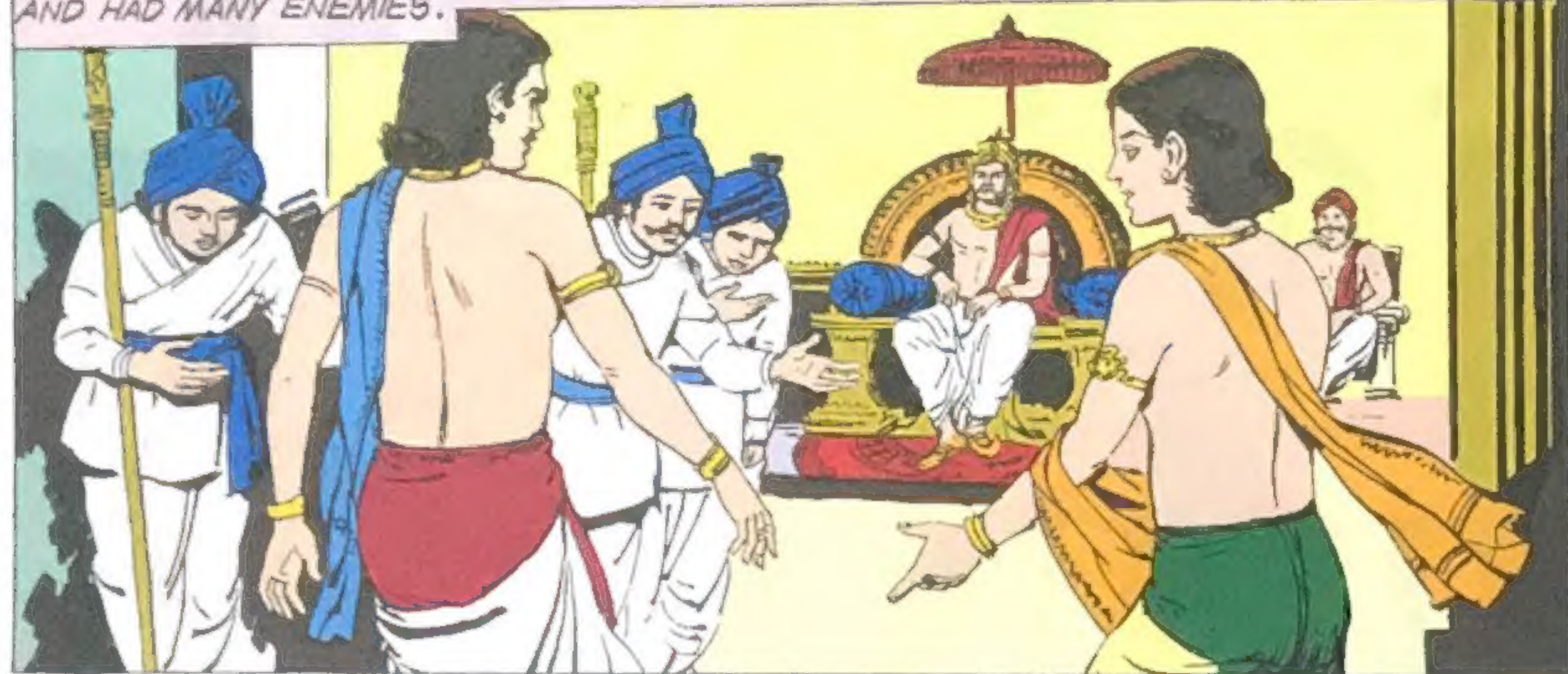


YOU'RE LATE,
ARUL. FATHER
HAS SENT FOR
ME. I'LL HAVE TO
GO NOW.

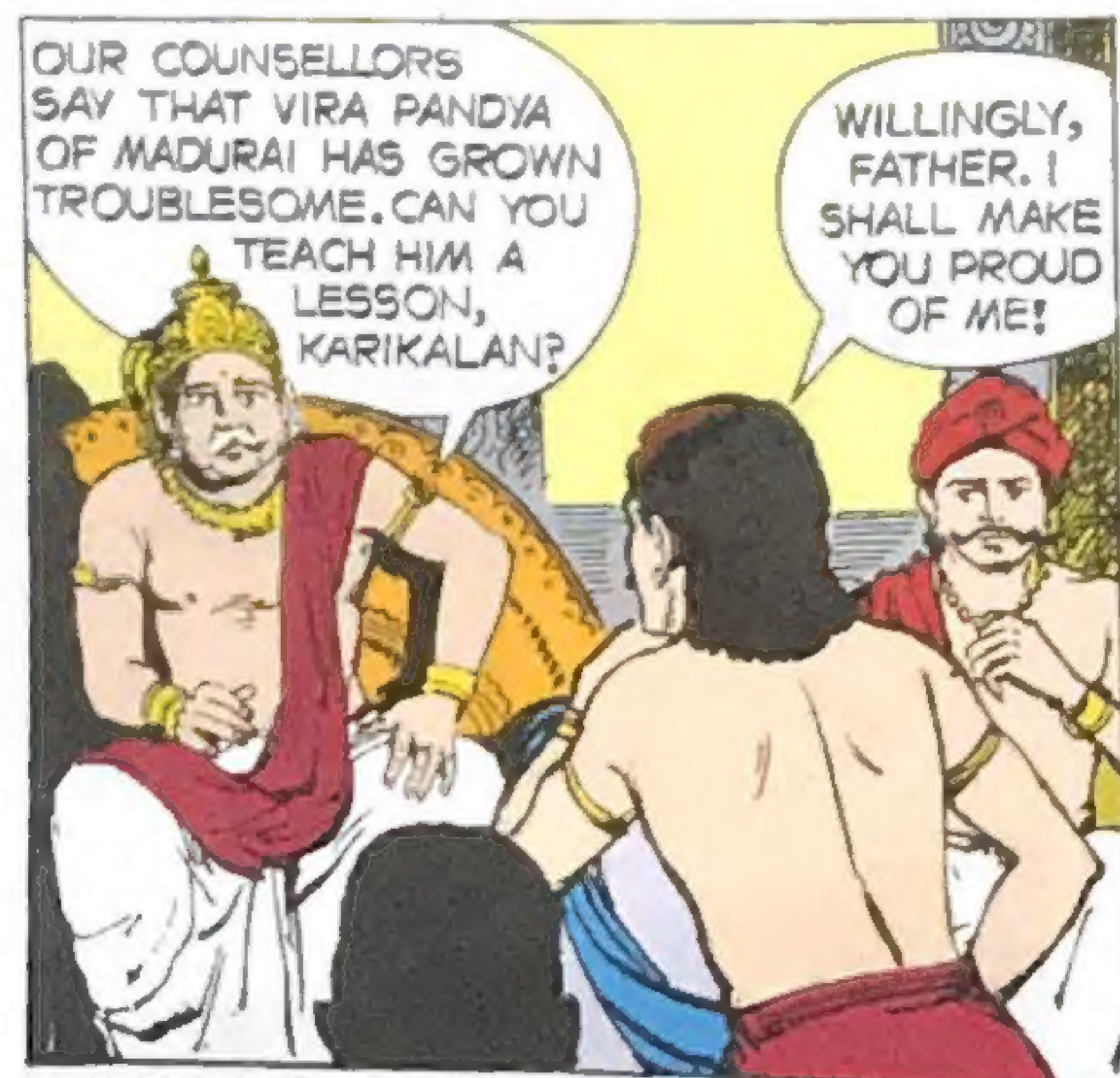
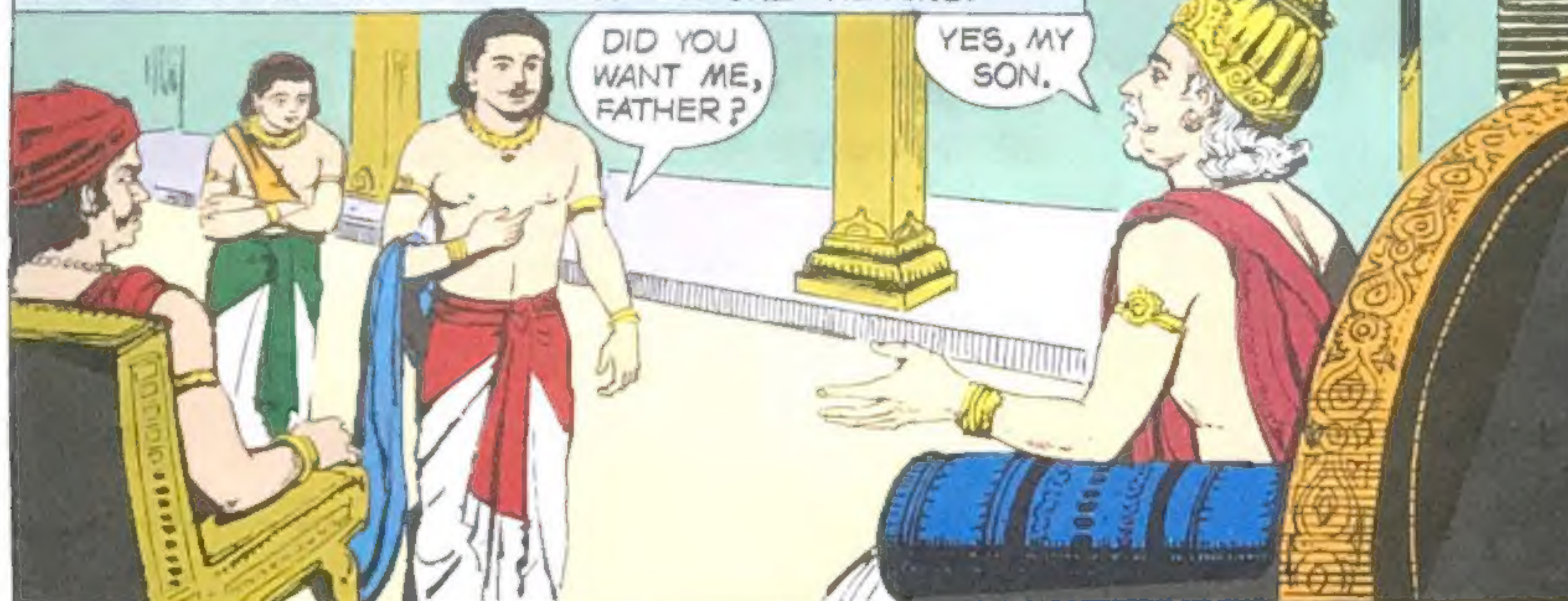
I'LL COME
WITH YOU.



YUVARAJA *KARIKALAN WAS AN AGGRESSIVE AND ARROGANT YOUTH. HE WAS UNPOPULAR AND HAD MANY ENEMIES.



THE WORST OF THEM WAS THE COMMANDER OF PARANTAKA'S ARMY. HE GLARED AT KARIKALAN AS HE STOOD BEFORE THE KING.



* CROWN PRINCE



WHEN DO WE GO?



AS THE COMMANDER TOOK THE HINT AND LEFT THE CHAMBER —



ARUL ANSWERED HIS QUERY.

OBEY FATHER'S WISHES.

PARANTAKA COULD NOT BEAR TO SEE KARIKALAN'S CRESTFALLEN FACE.

ALAS, MY SON, I AM SORRY. BUT MY CONSCIENCE TELLS ME I MUST RETURN IT. BESIDES...



... HE HAS MANY STRONG SUPPORTERS— AMONG THEM THE COMMANDER OF OUR ARMY AND HIS WIFE, NANDINI. AND THEY HATE YOU.

PLEASE GIVE ME LEAVE TO GO AWAY AND THINK OVER WHAT YOU'VE SAID, FATHER.



FOLLOWED BY ARUL, KARIKALAN WENT TO KUNDAVAI, AND UNBURDENED HIS HEART.

... THIS MEANS THAT I SHALL NOT SUCCEED FATHER.

DO NOT FRET, DEAR BROTHER.



WHEN YOU COME BACK VICTORIOUS FROM BATTLE, THE PEOPLE WILL CLAMOUR FOR YOU. THE COWARD UTTAMA WILL NOT STAND A CHANCE.



AT THAT MOMENT, VANDIYA DEVAN, A CLOSE FRIEND OF KARIKALAN, WALKED IN.

AH! THEN THERE IS SOME TRUTH IN THE RUMOURS I'VE HEARD. WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE TO DO?



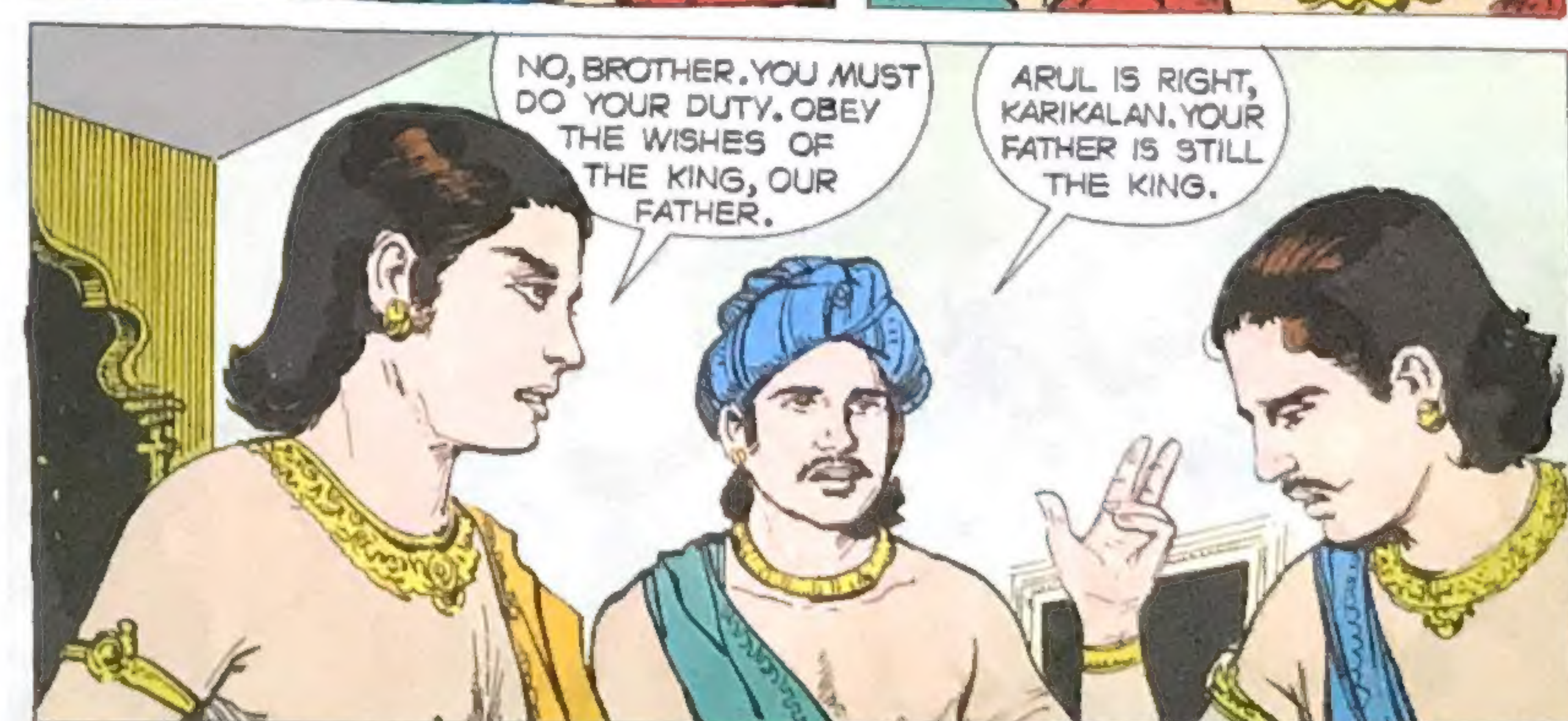
KUNDAVAI HAD NO DOUBTS.

HE WILL FIGHT FOR WHAT IS HIS!



NO, BROTHER. YOU MUST DO YOUR DUTY. OBEY THE WISHES OF THE KING, OUR FATHER.

ARUL IS RIGHT, KARIKALAN. YOUR FATHER IS STILL THE KING.

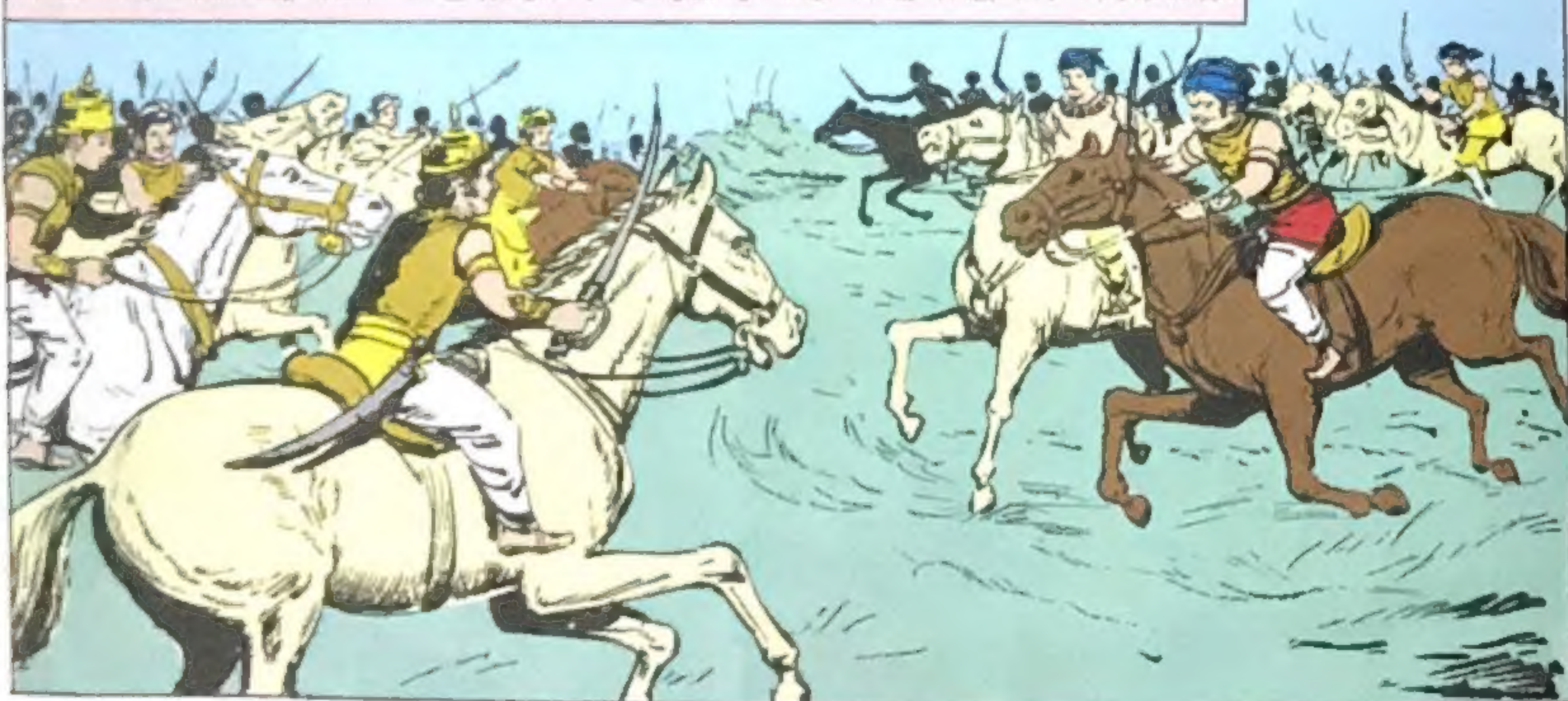




THE NEXT DAY, KARIKALAN AND ARUL RODE OUT TO MADURAI WITH THEIR FORCES.



THE TWO ARMIES MET—THE MIGHTY CHOLAS AND THE VALIANT PANDYAS.



THE BATTLE RAGED THROUGH THE DAY.



KARIKALAN AND ARUL FOUGHT FEARLESSLY, BUT VIRA PANDYA AND HIS MEN PUT UP A STOUT RESISTANCE.



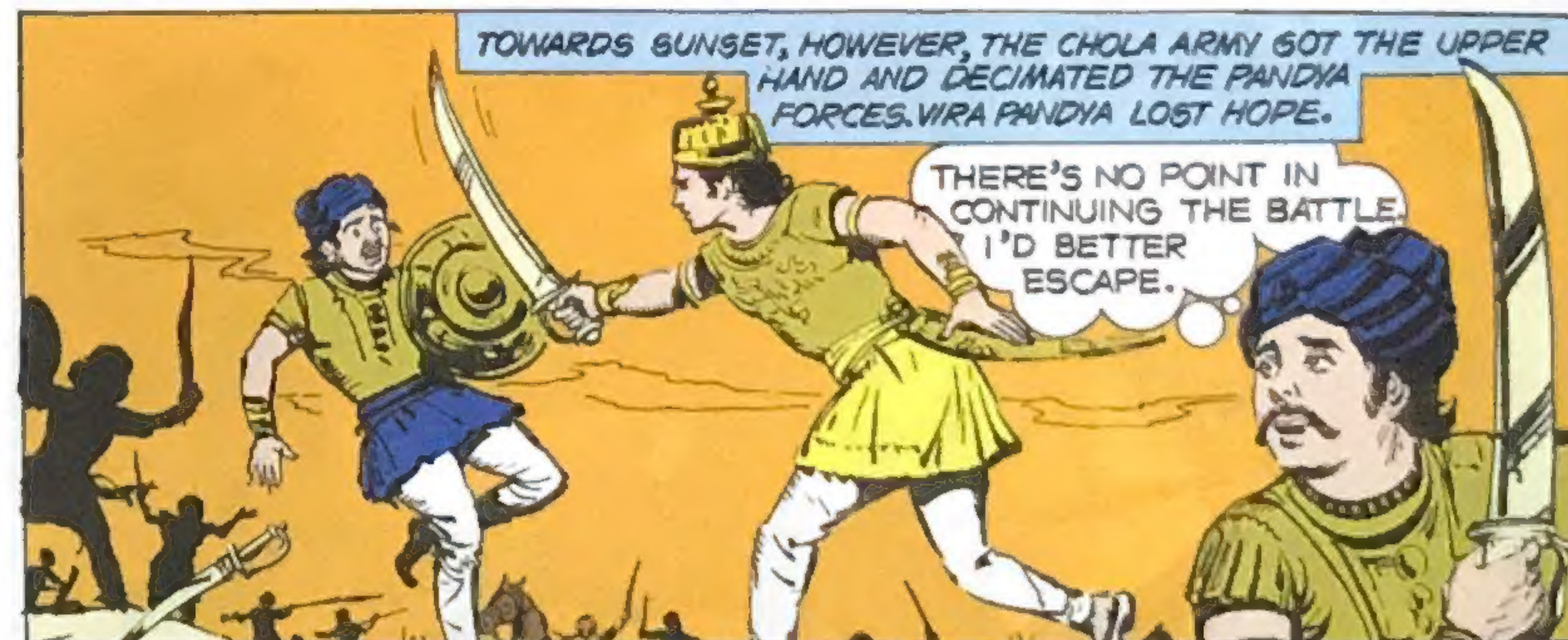
ARUL WAS WORRIED.

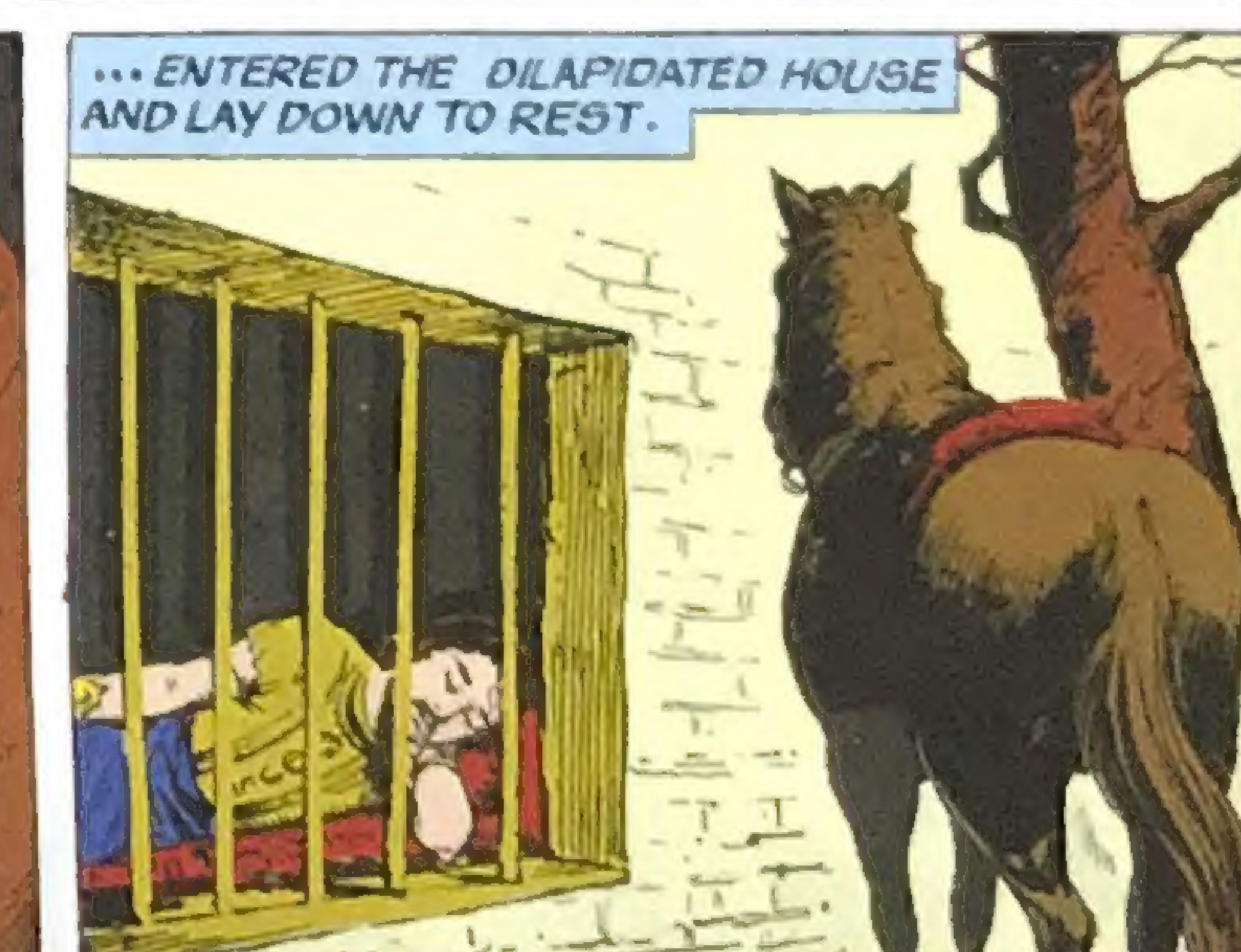
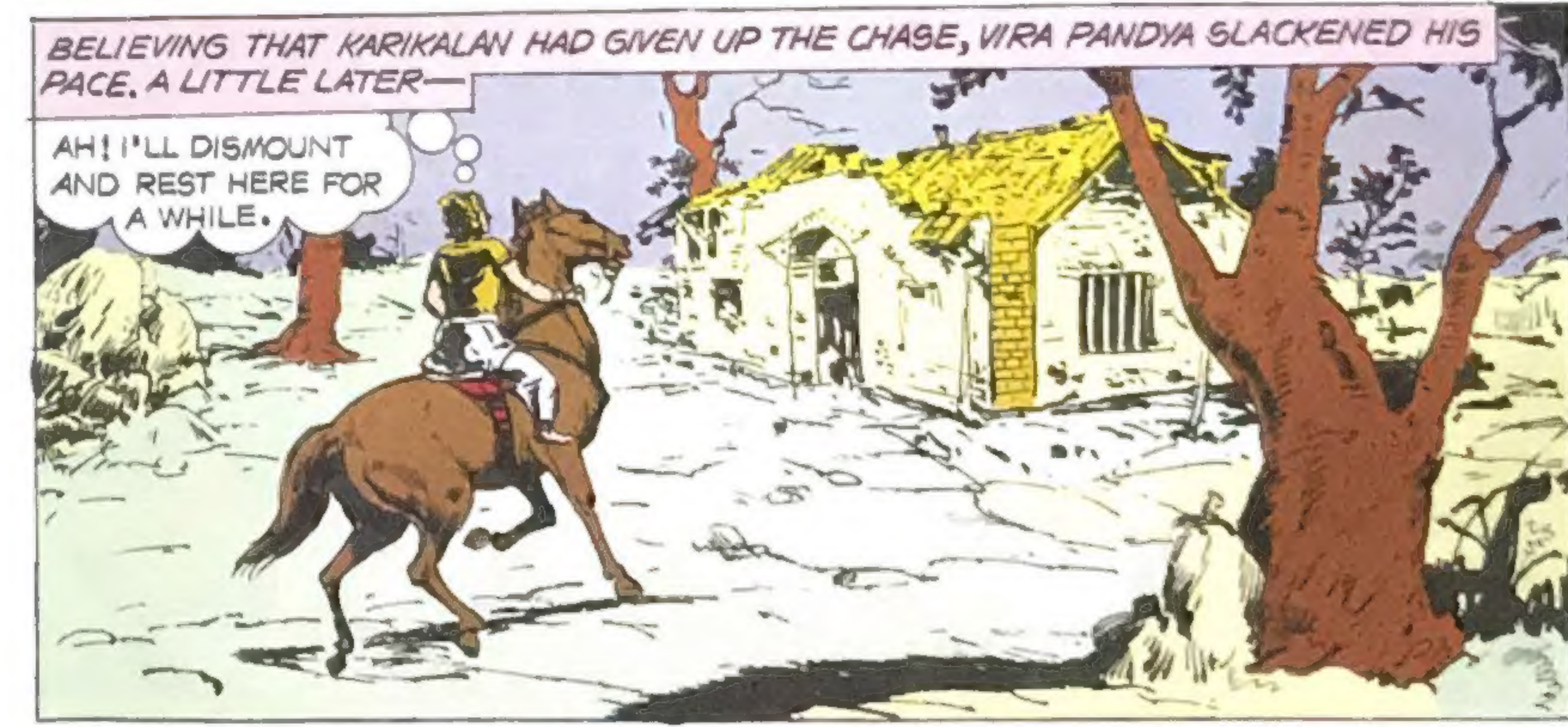
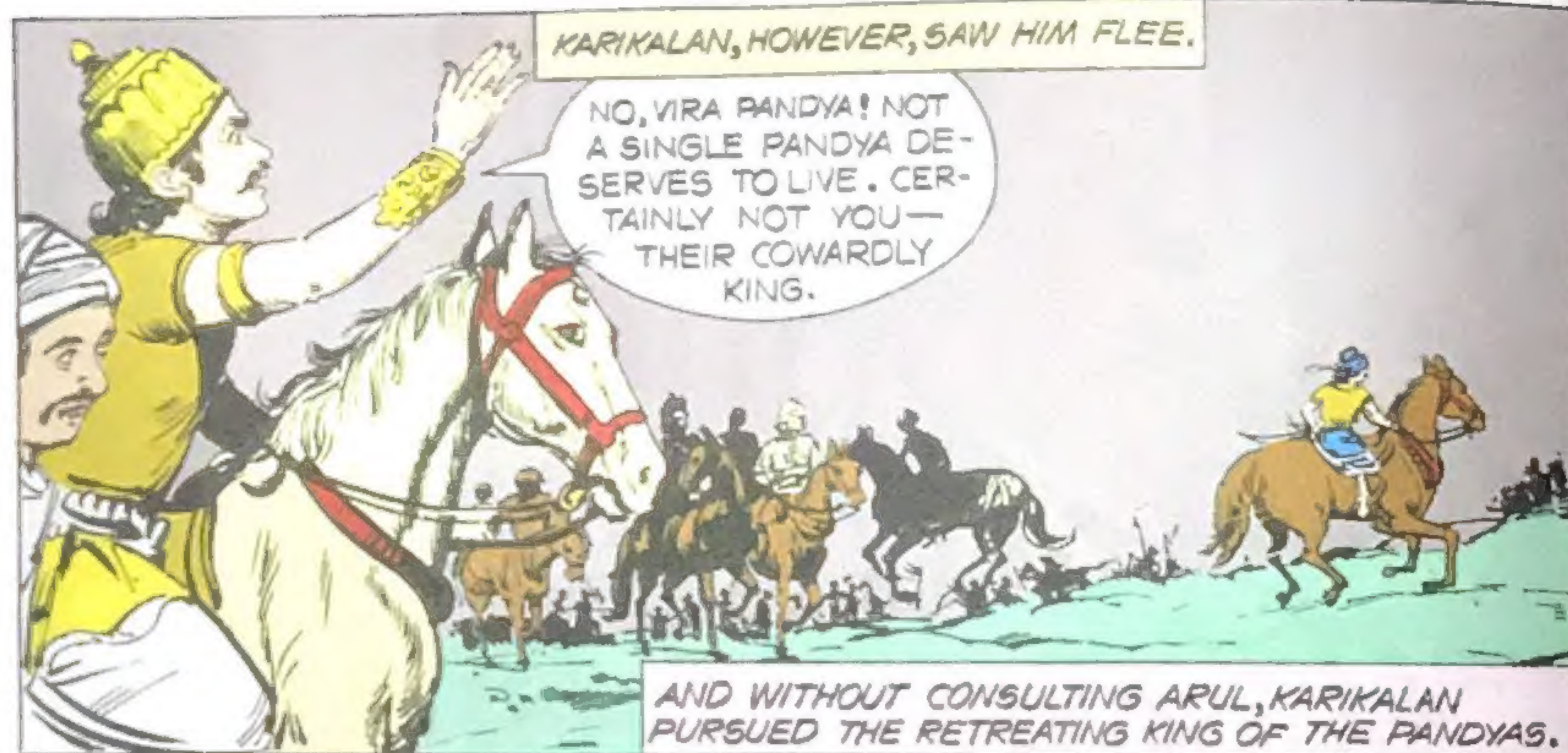
OUR MEN ARE BRAVE BUT WE ARE OUTNUMBERED. O GOD, LET US NOT SUFFER DEFEAT.



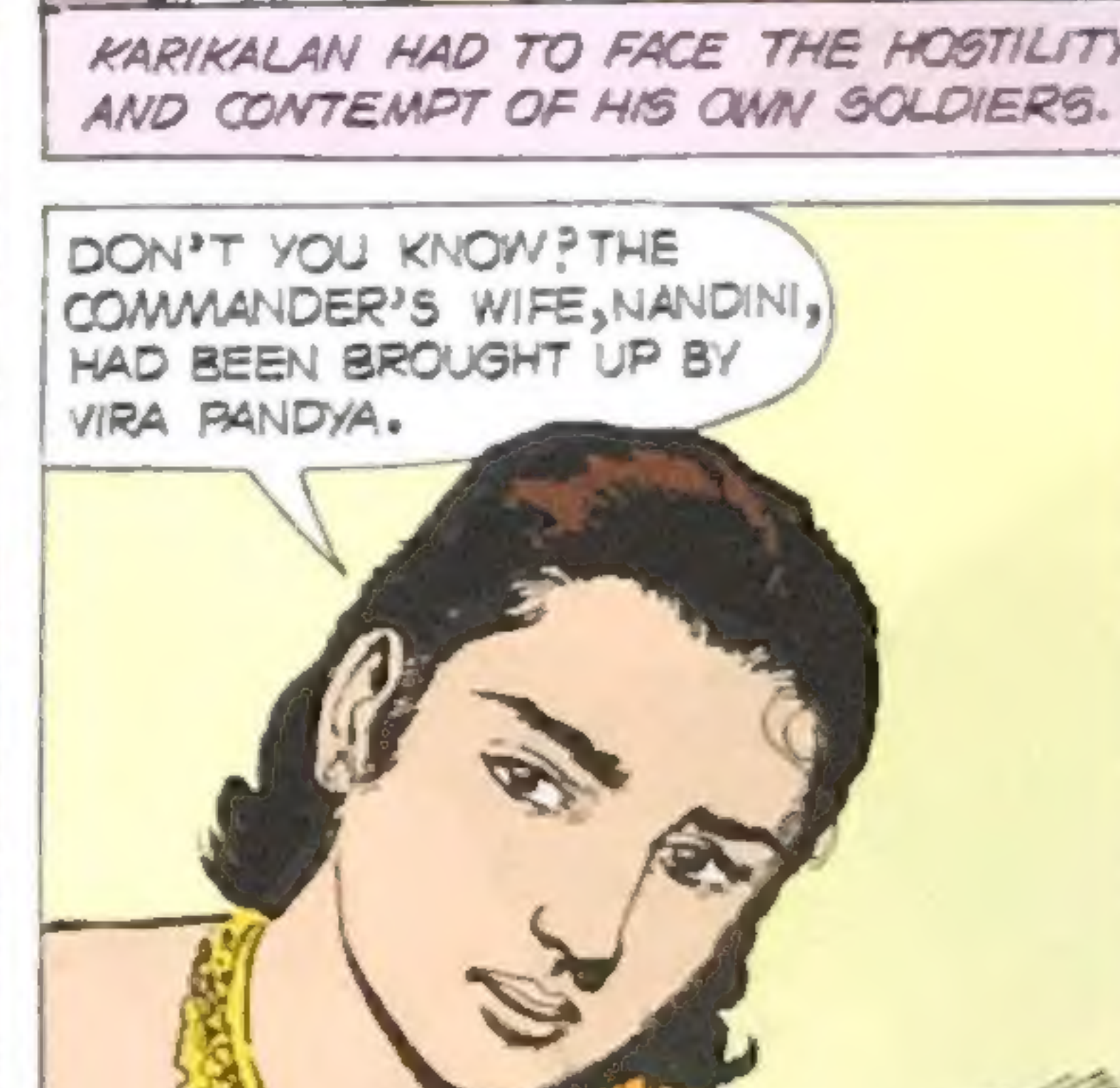
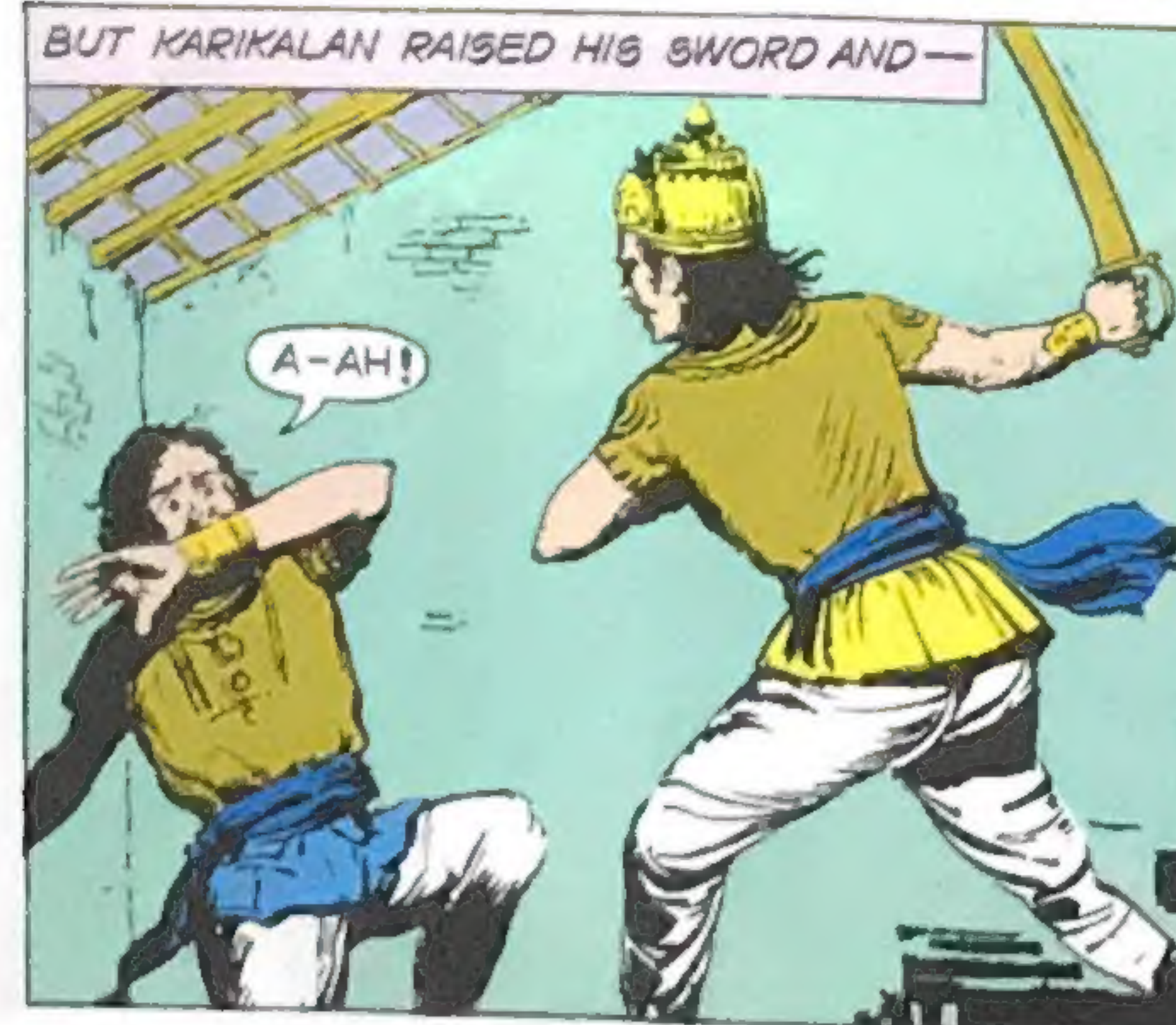
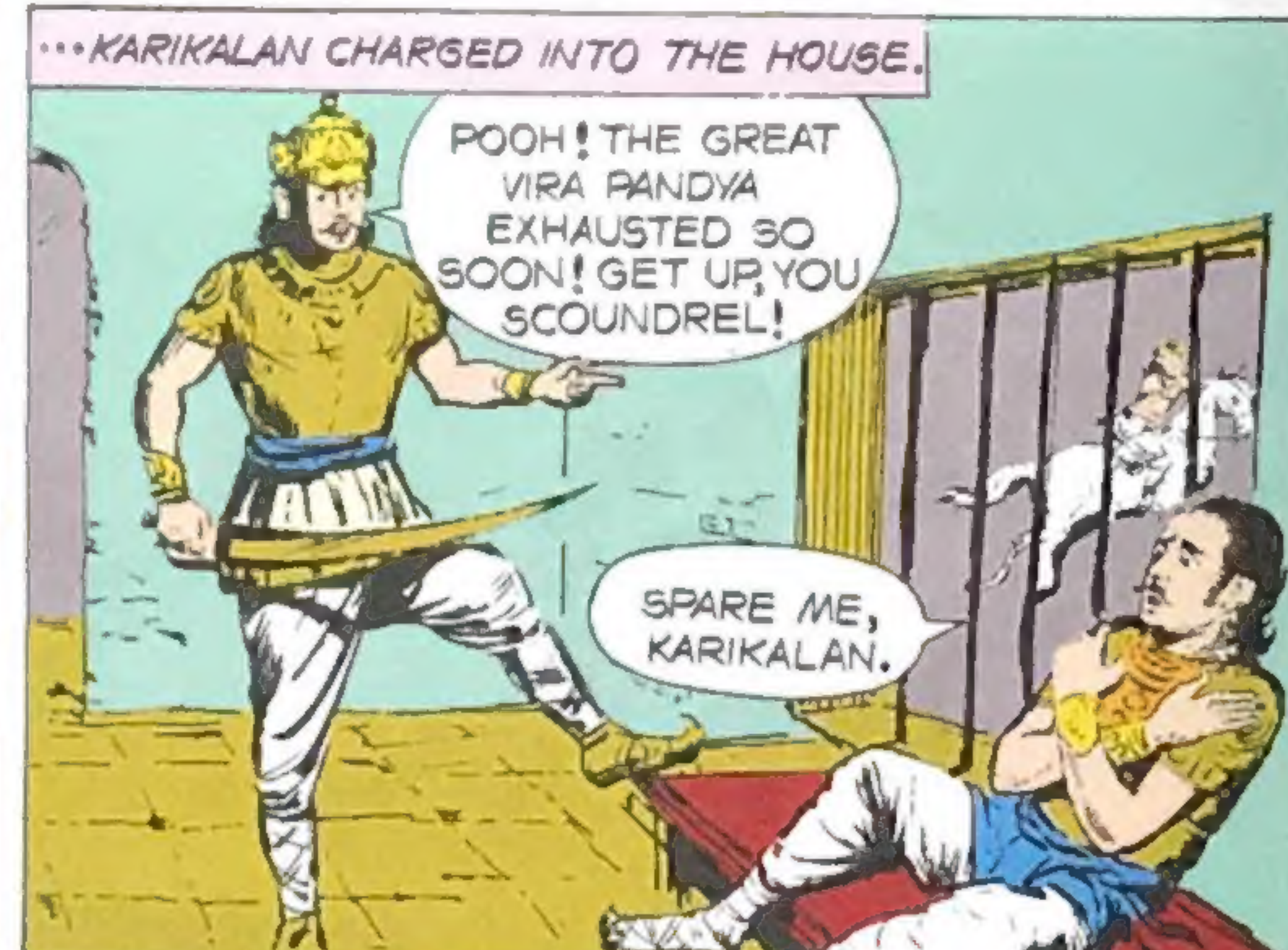
TOWARDS SUNSET, HOWEVER, THE CHOLA ARMY GOT THE UPPER HAND AND DECIMATED THE PANDYA FORCES. VIRA PANDYA LOST HOPE.

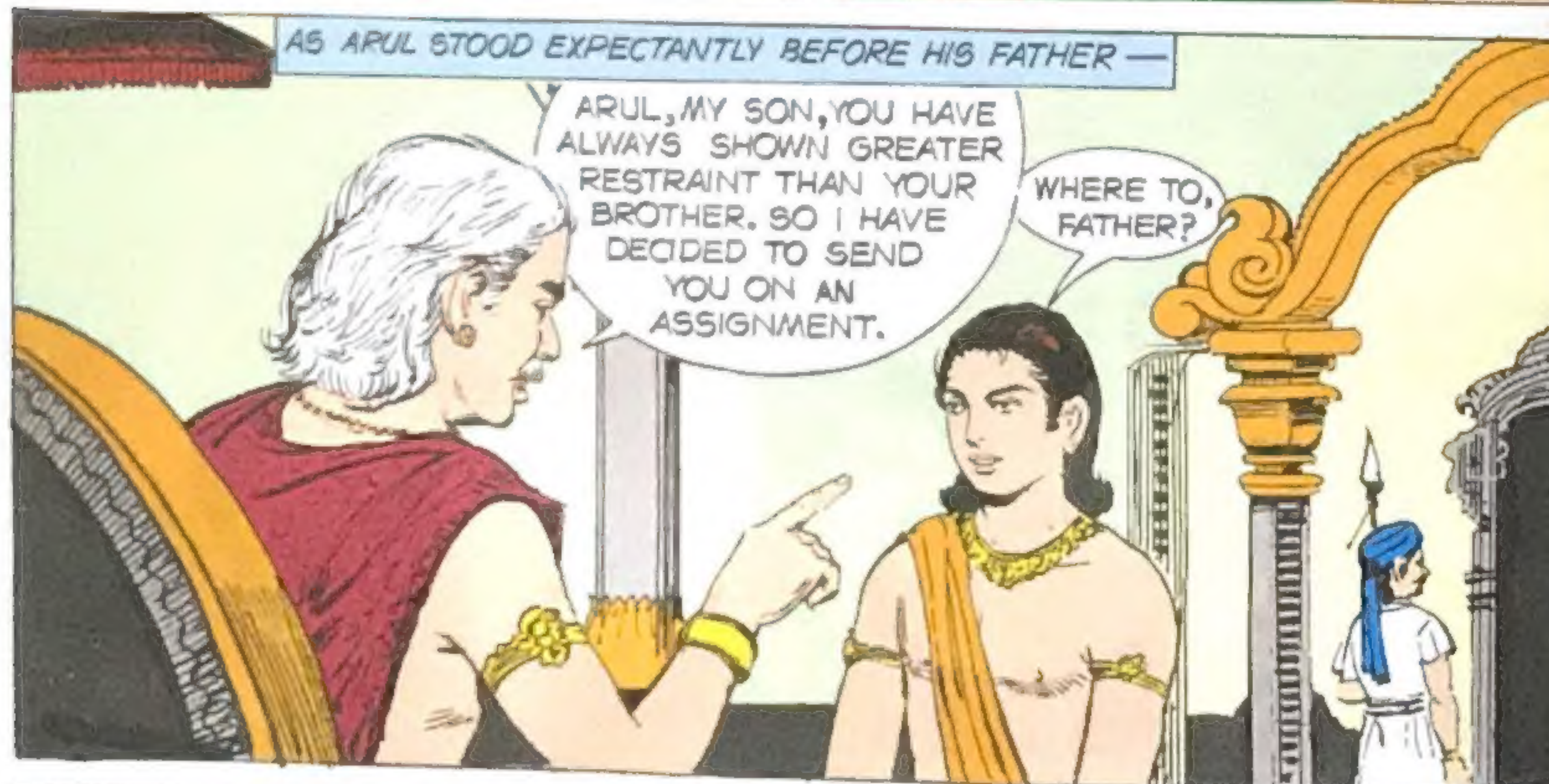
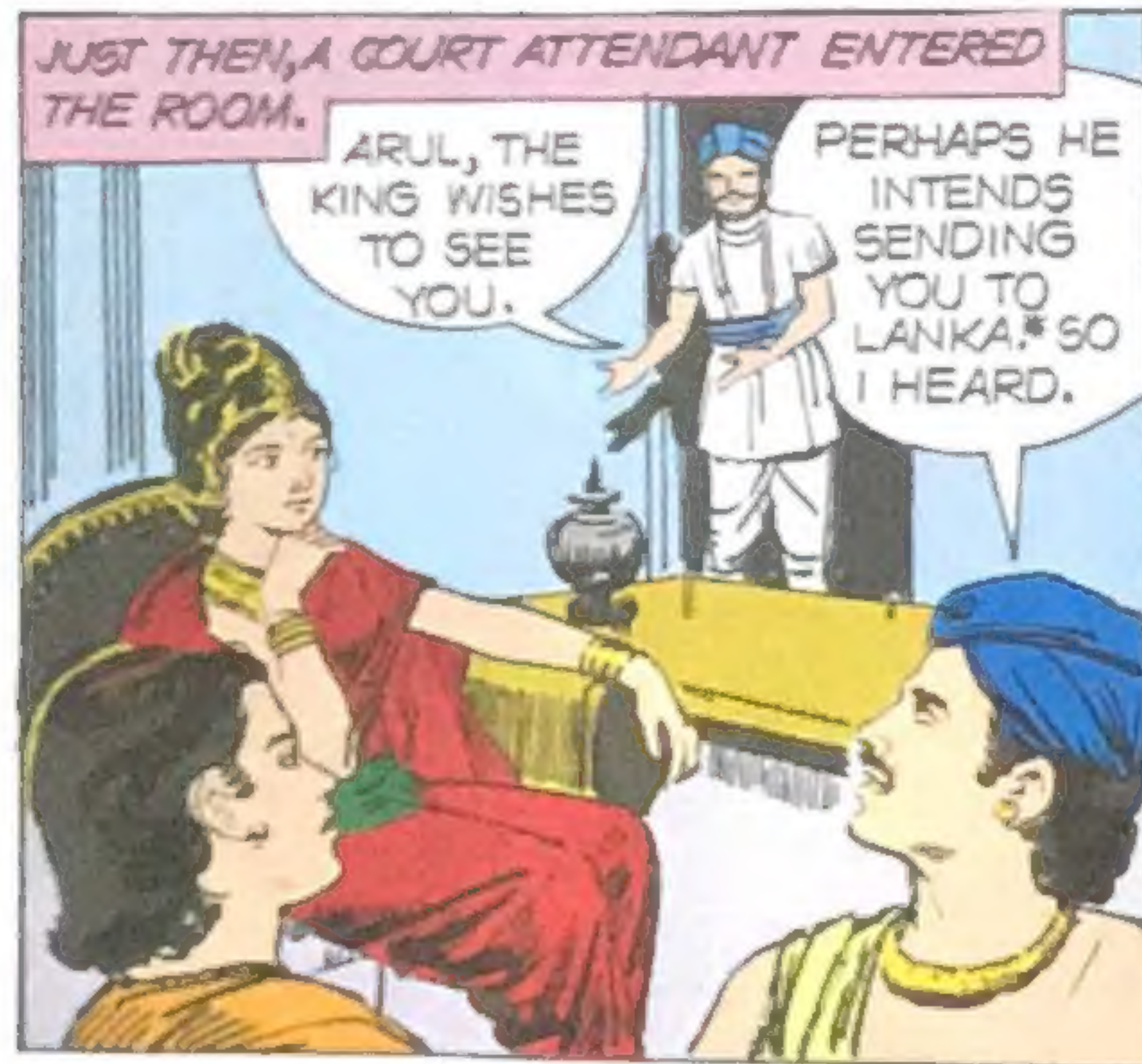
THERE'S NO POINT IN CONTINUING THE BATTLE. I'D BETTER ESCAPE.



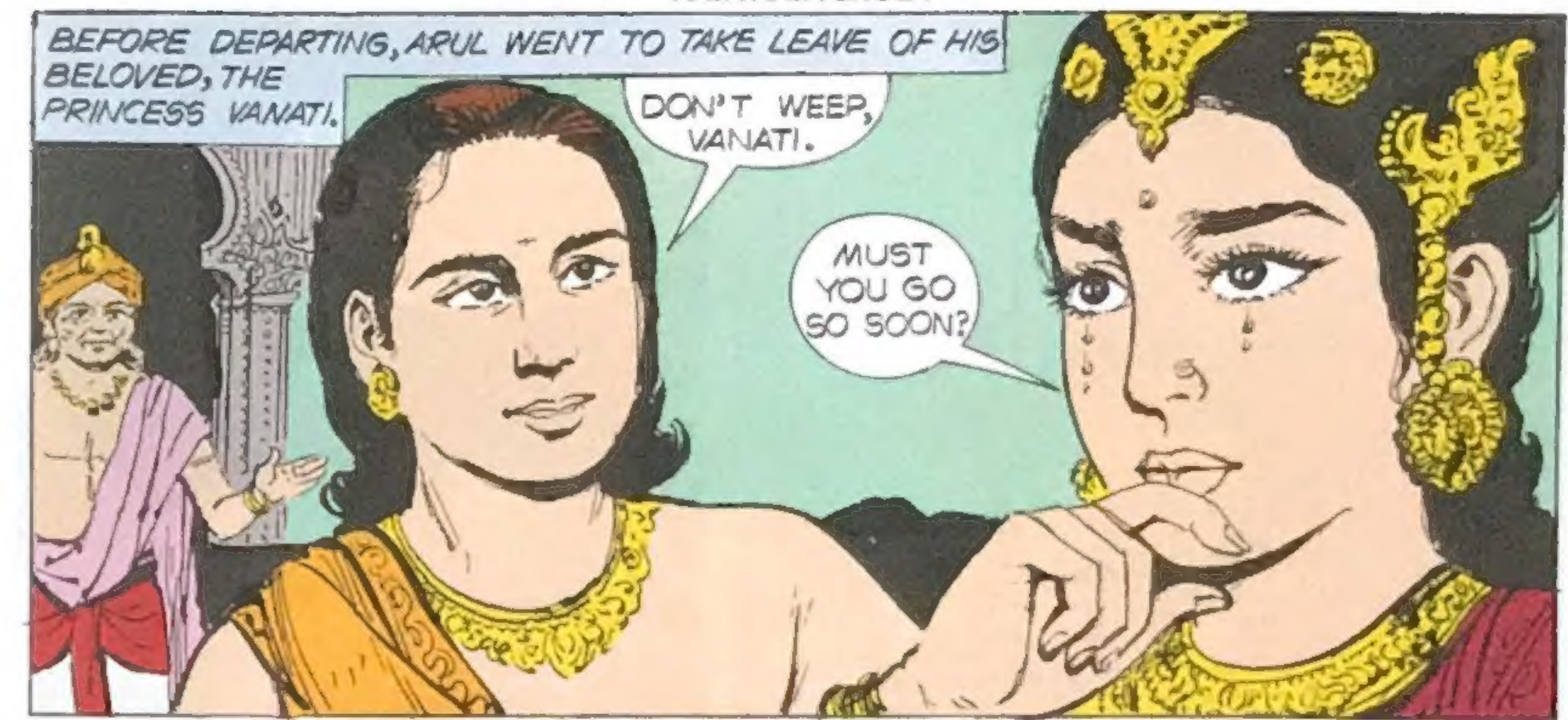


A FEW MINUTES LATER, KARIKALAN RODE UP AND DISMOUNTED.





* THE ISLAND OF CEYLON NOW KNOWN AS SRI LANKA.



THE NEXT DAY, ARUL AND HIS MEN SET SAIL FOR LANKA.

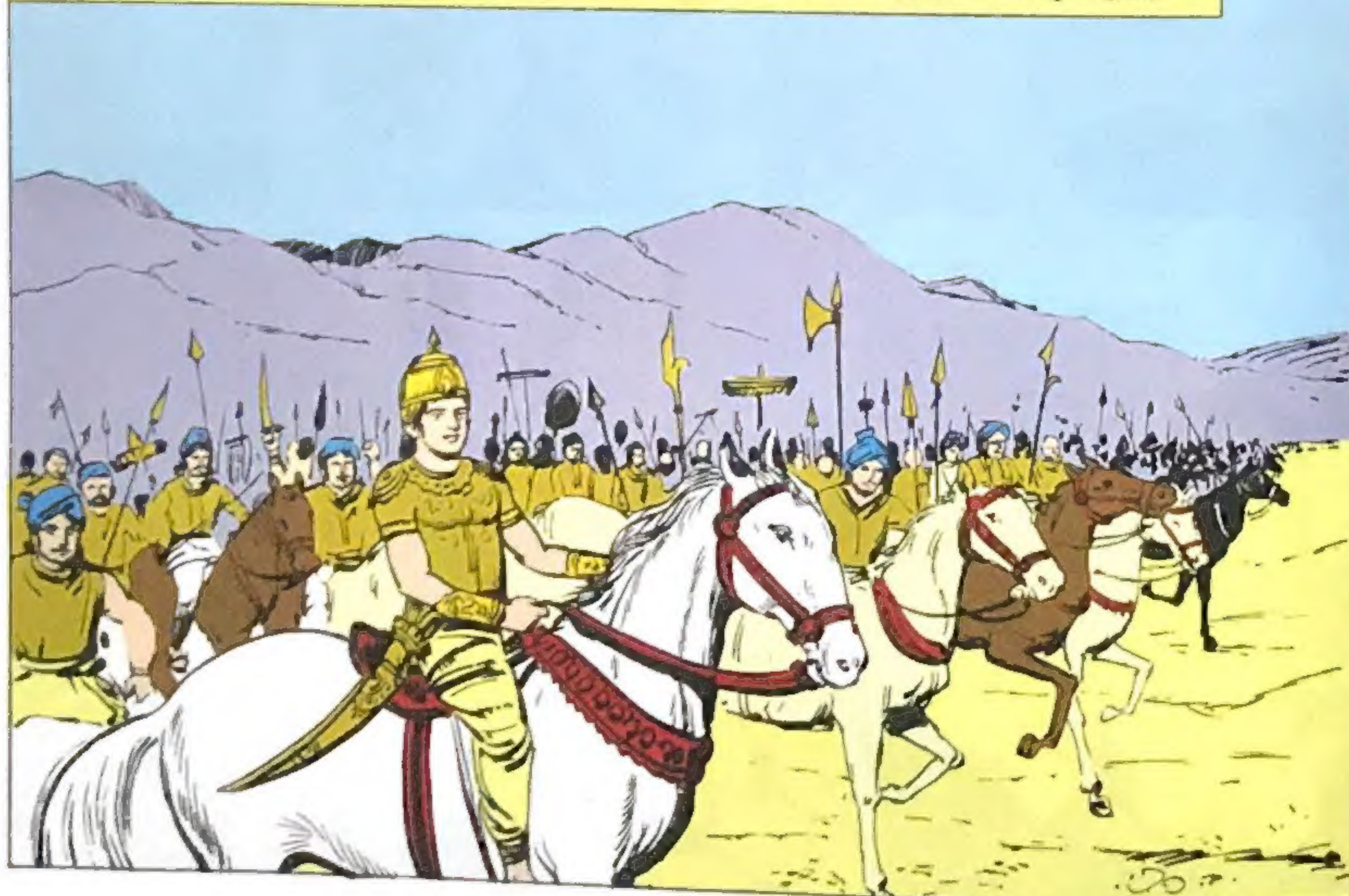


AT LANKA —

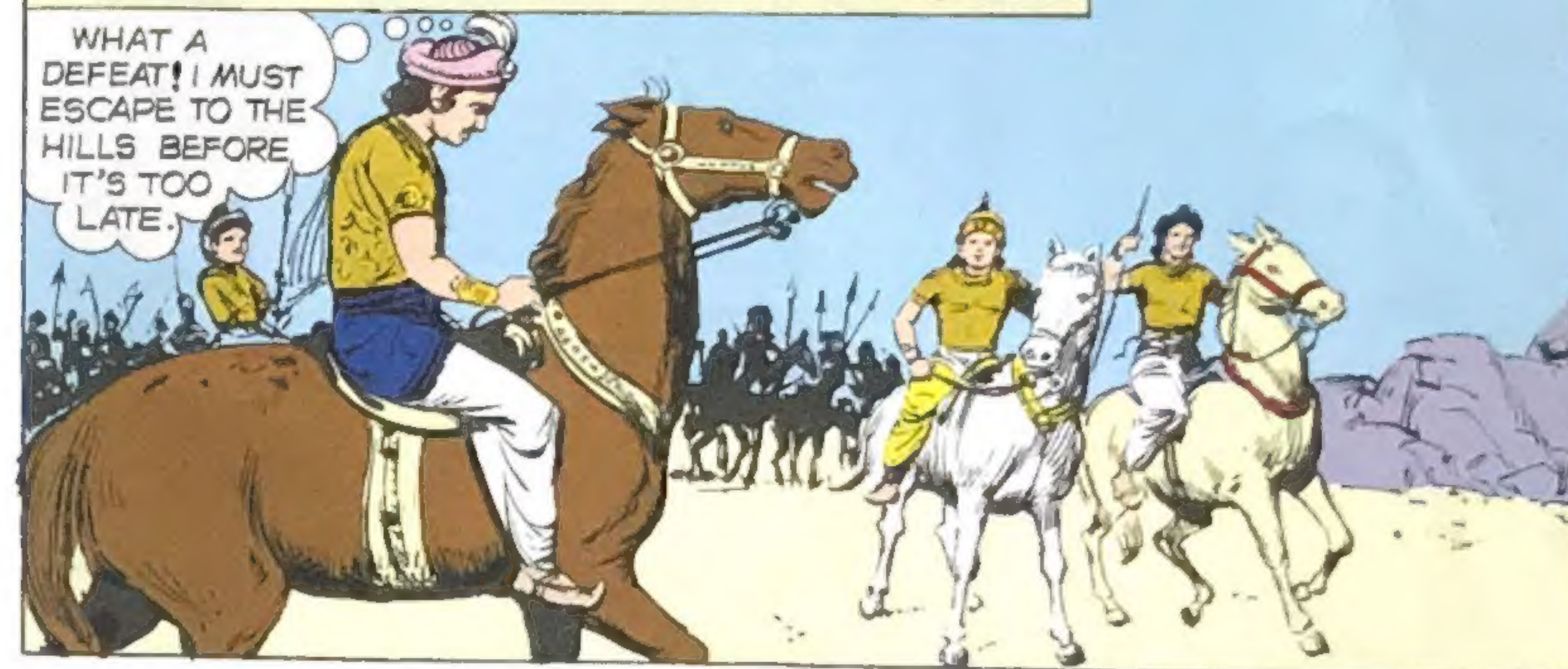
TOMORROW WE ATTACK. LET US GET ALL THE REST WE CAN TONIGHT. GOOD-NIGHT, MY MEN.



BEFORE DAWN THE CHOLA ARMY ADVANCED UPON ITS UNSUSPECTING FOES...



...AND OVERPOWERED THEM, MAHENDRA DECIDED TO FLEE.



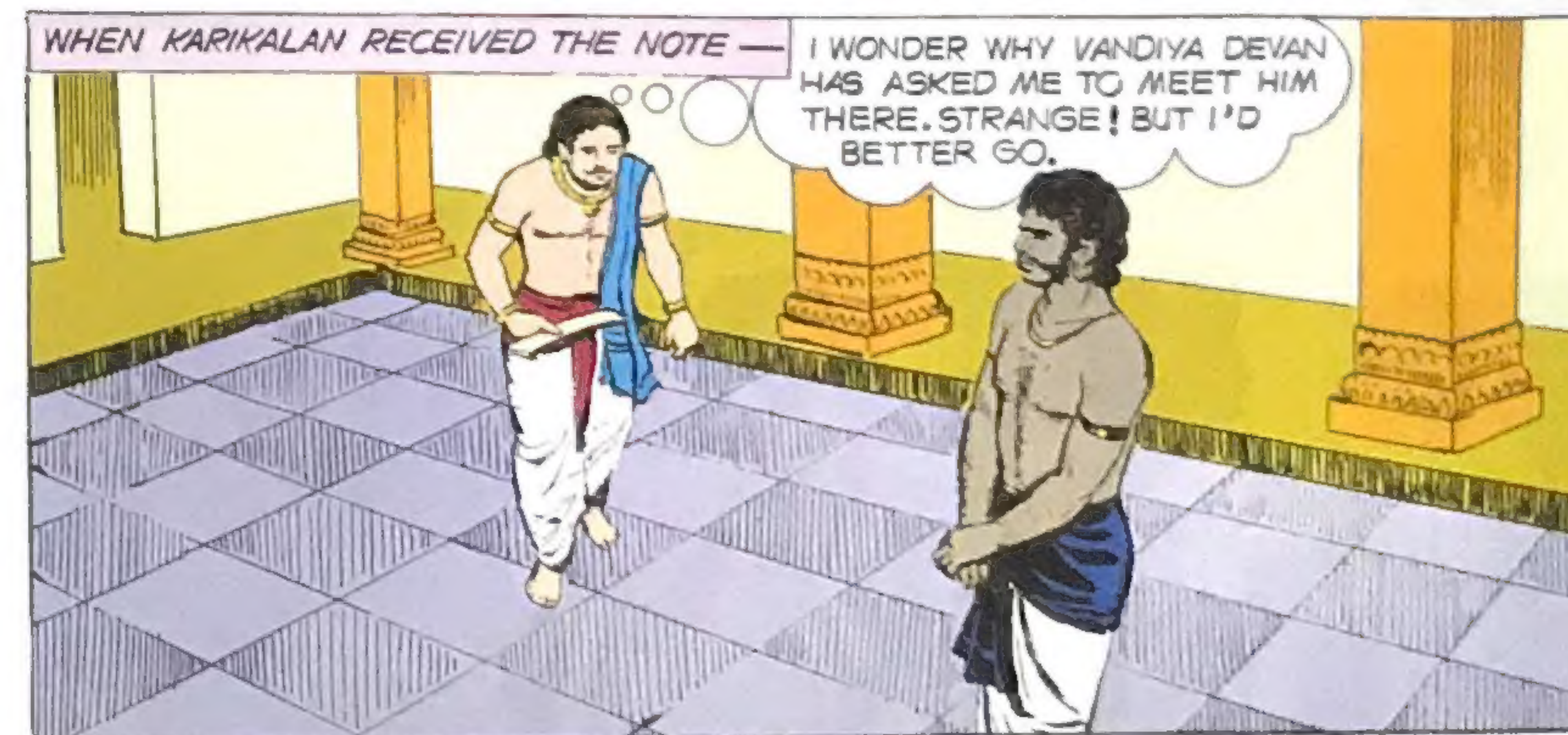
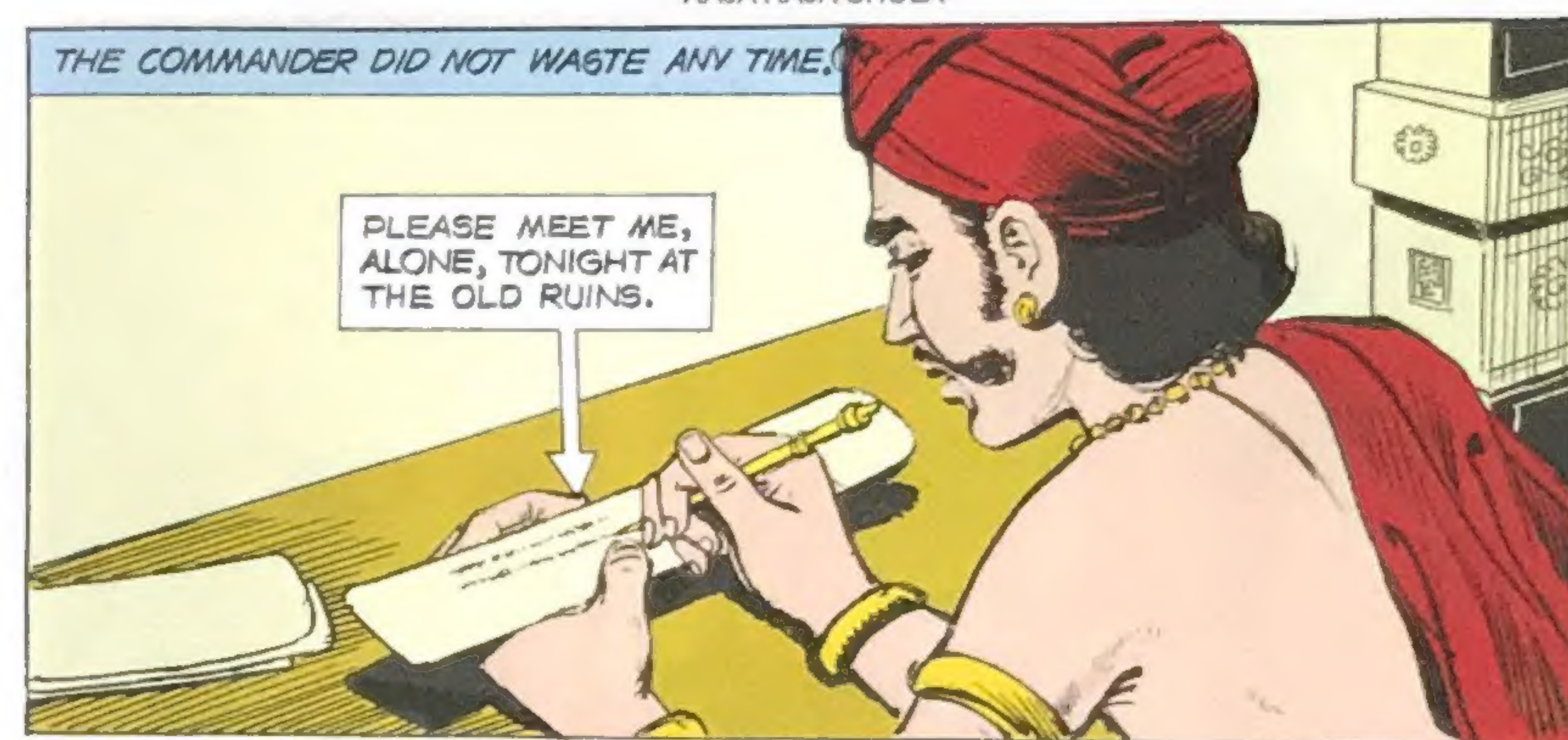
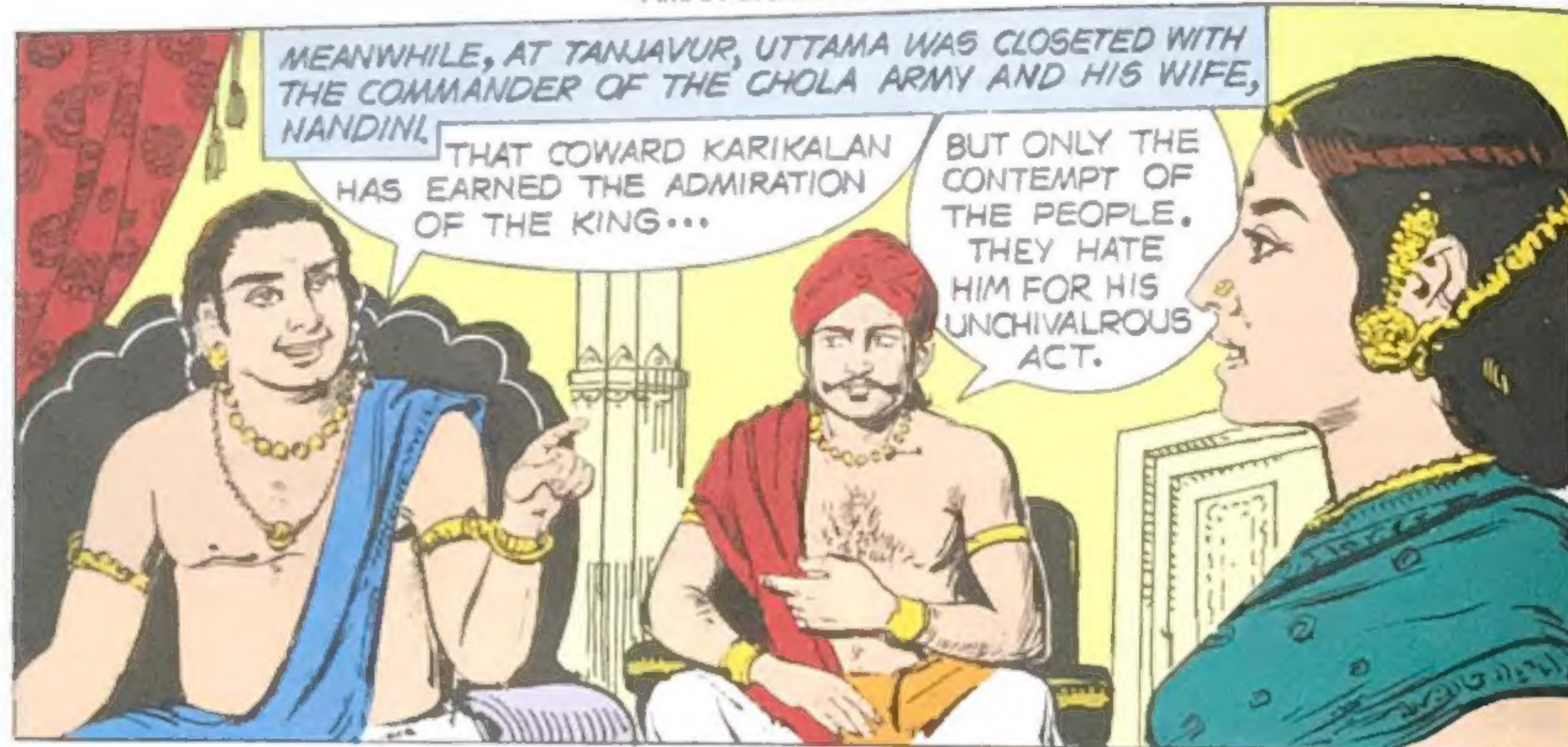
MAHENDRA WAS AT ARUL'S MERCY.



ARUL'S GENEROUS ACT MADE HIS SOLDIERS ADMIRE HIM EVEN MORE.



WHAT WE NEED IS A KING OF HIS STATURE. BRAVE AND STRONG YET COURTEOUS, KIND AND CHIVALROUS. HE BREATHES NOBILITY.



THAT NIGHT, AS KARIKALAN WAITED AT THE RUINS—



THOUGH THEY HAD SPOKEN IN WHISPERS, KARIKALAN'S EARS WERE SHARP.



IT WAS DAWN WHEN THE RUTHLESS KILLERS RODE BACK TO THE CITY.



THE NEWS SOON REACHED THE PALACE.

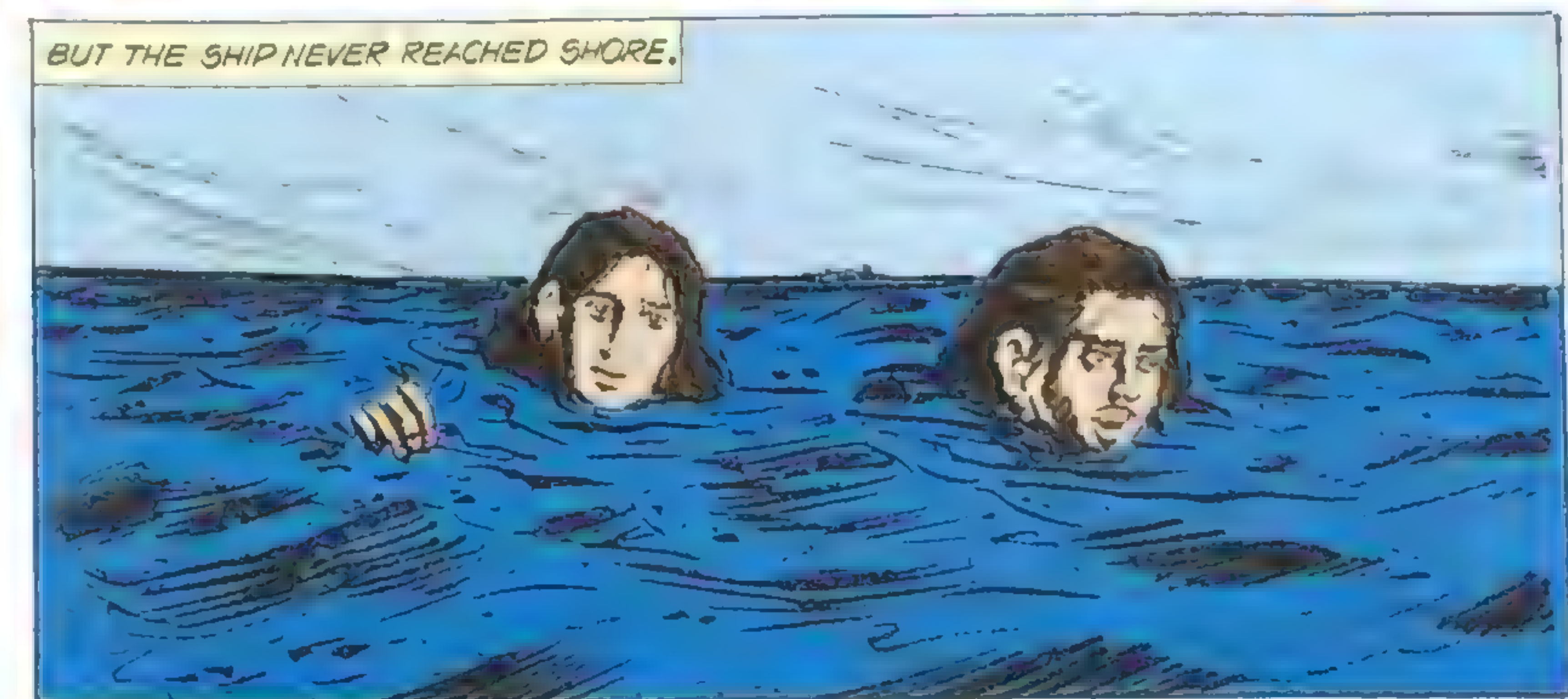
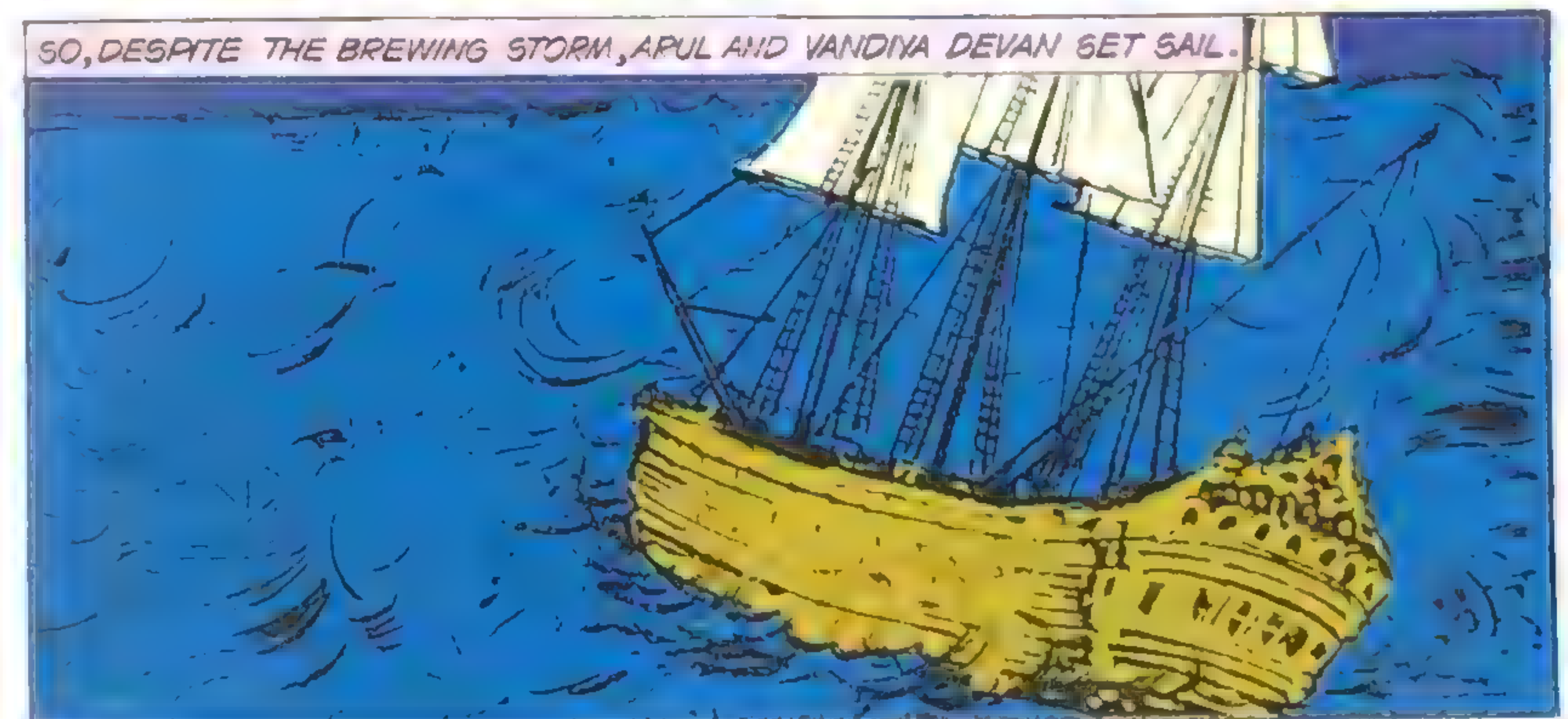
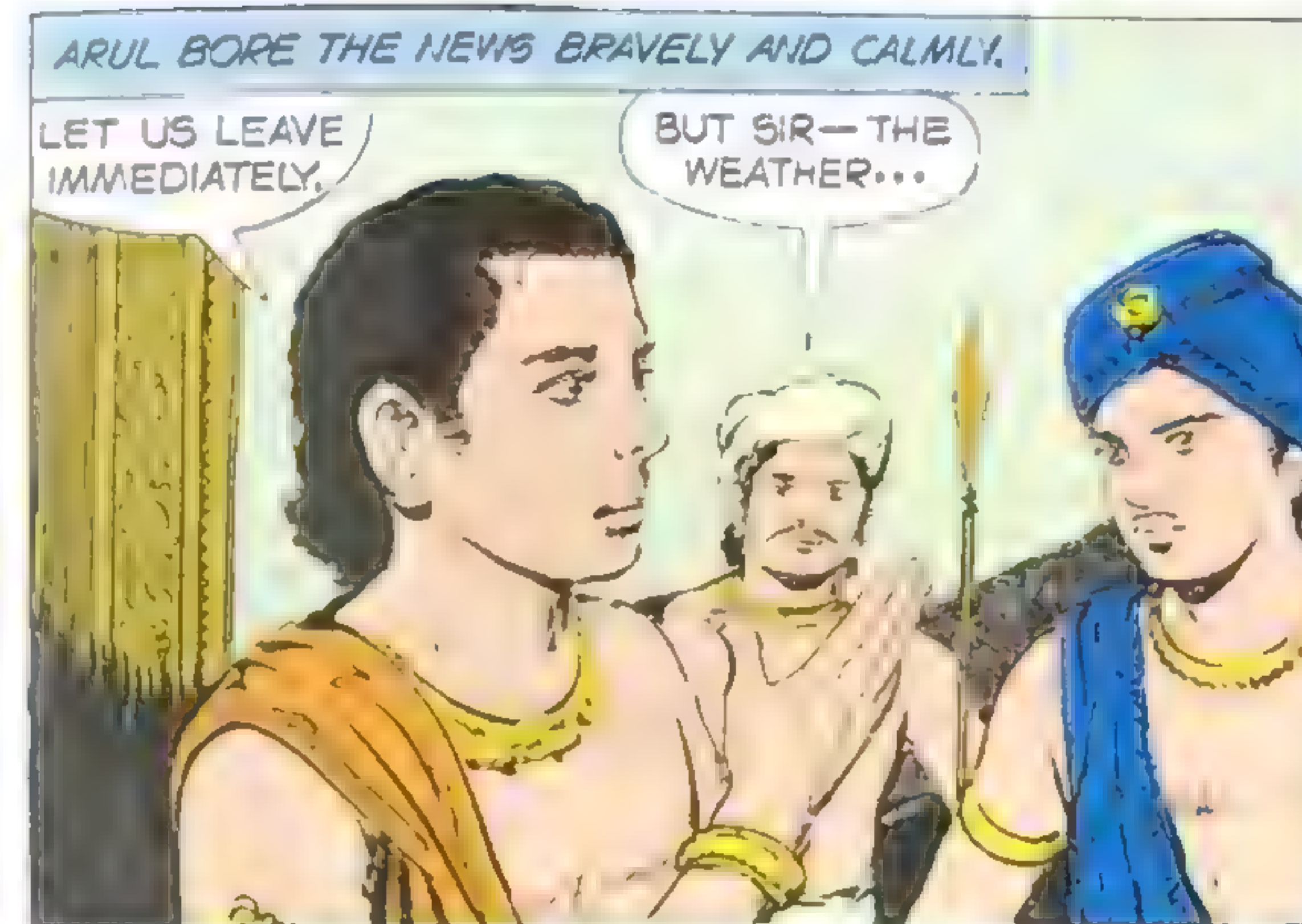


KUNDAVAI WAS SHOCKED.

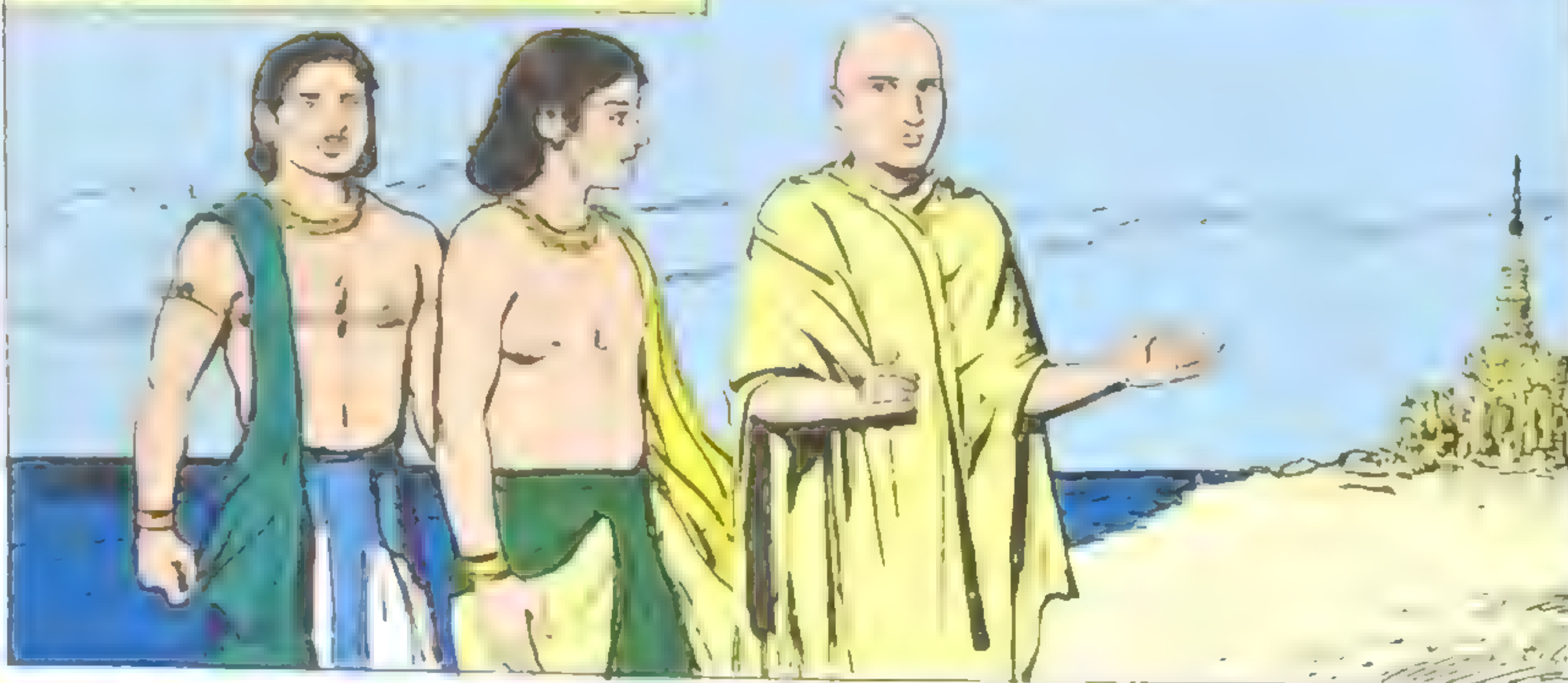


VANDIYA DEVAN RODE OUT TO THE RUINS.





ARUL AND VANDIYA DEVAN, HOWEVER, SURVIVED AND TOOK SHELTER WITH SOME BUDDHIST MONKS AT NAGAPATTINAM.



MEANWHILE AT TANJAVUR, THE COMMANDER PRESSED THE AILING KING TO INSTALL UTTAMA AS THE CROWN PRINCE.



DO NOT DELAY ANY MORE, SR. IT'S NOT WISE.

YES, YES! I KNOW, BUT LET ARUL RETURN.

AT THAT MOMENT ARUL AND VANDIYA DEVAN WALKED IN.



DO MY EYES DECEIVE ME? IS THAT YOU ARUL?

YES, FATHER. I HAVE COME.

AND RUINED MY PLANS.



ARUL, MY DAYS ARE NUMBERED. WHAT SHOULD I DO? YOUR BROTHER IS DEAD. WE HAVE NO YUVARAJA AND... AND...

ARUL UNDERSTOOD WHAT HIS FATHER FOUND DIFFICULT TO UTTER.



FATHER I SHALL MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR UTTAMA TO BE INSTALLED AS YUVARAJA.

PARANTAKA WAS RELIEVED.



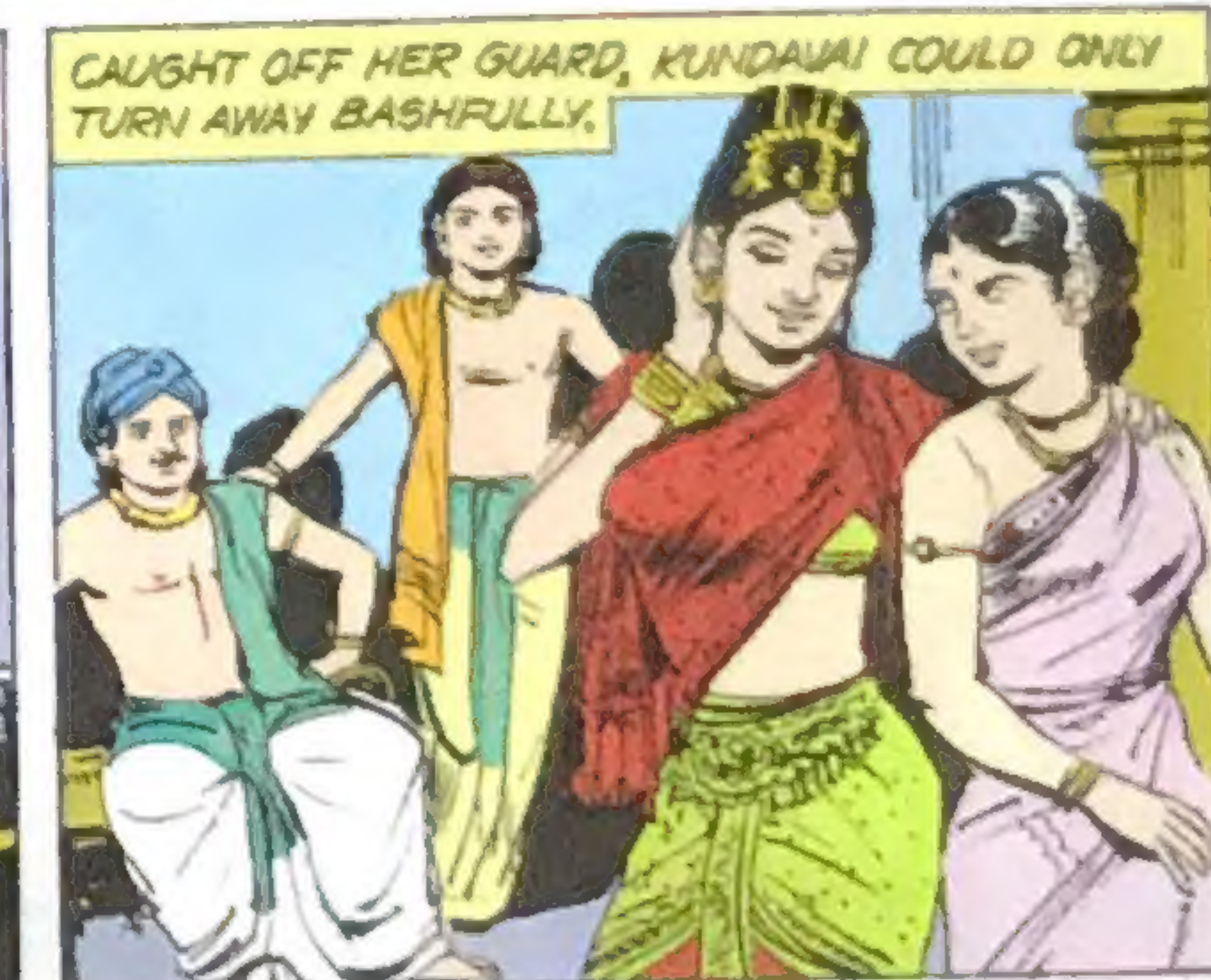
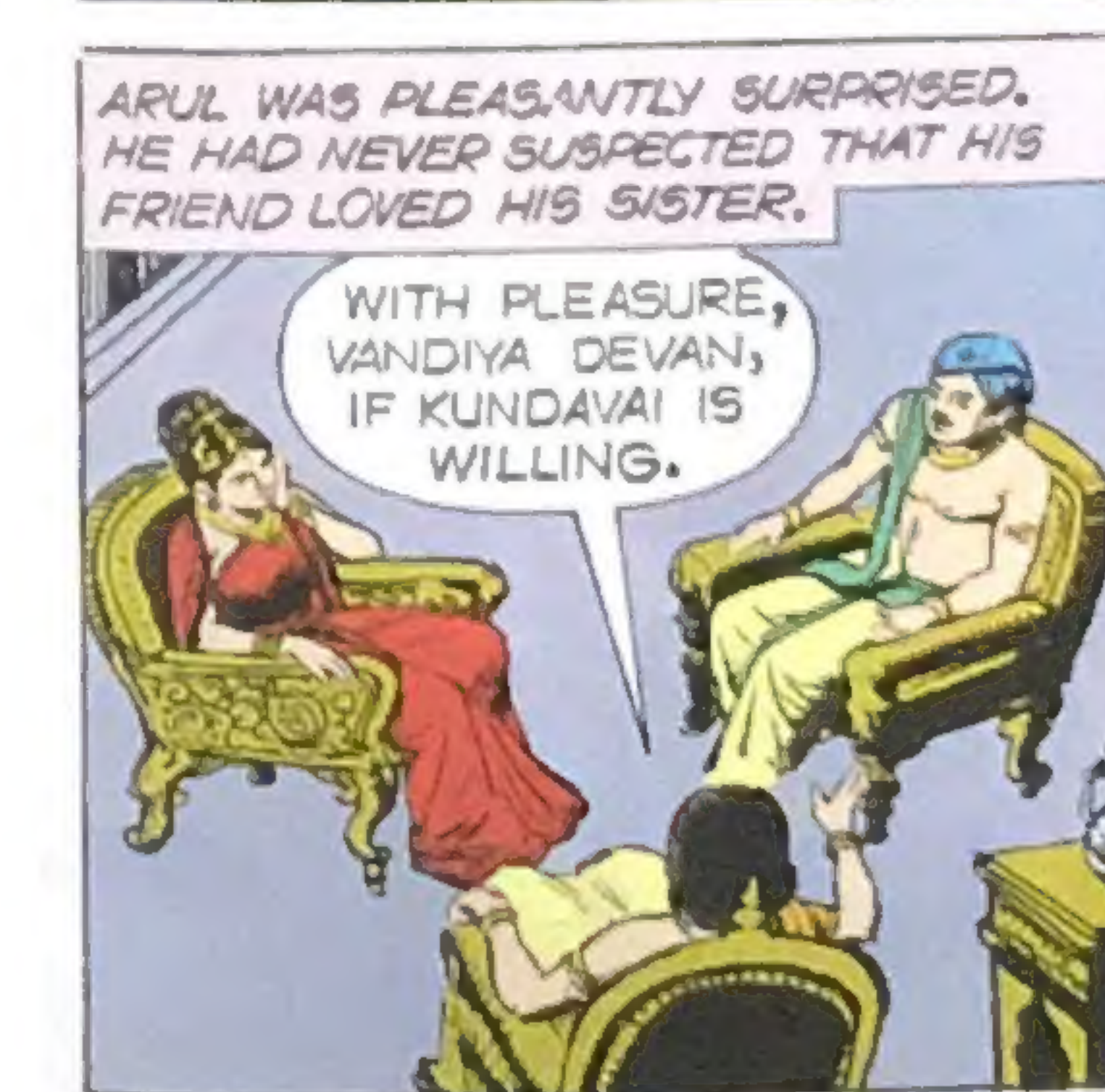
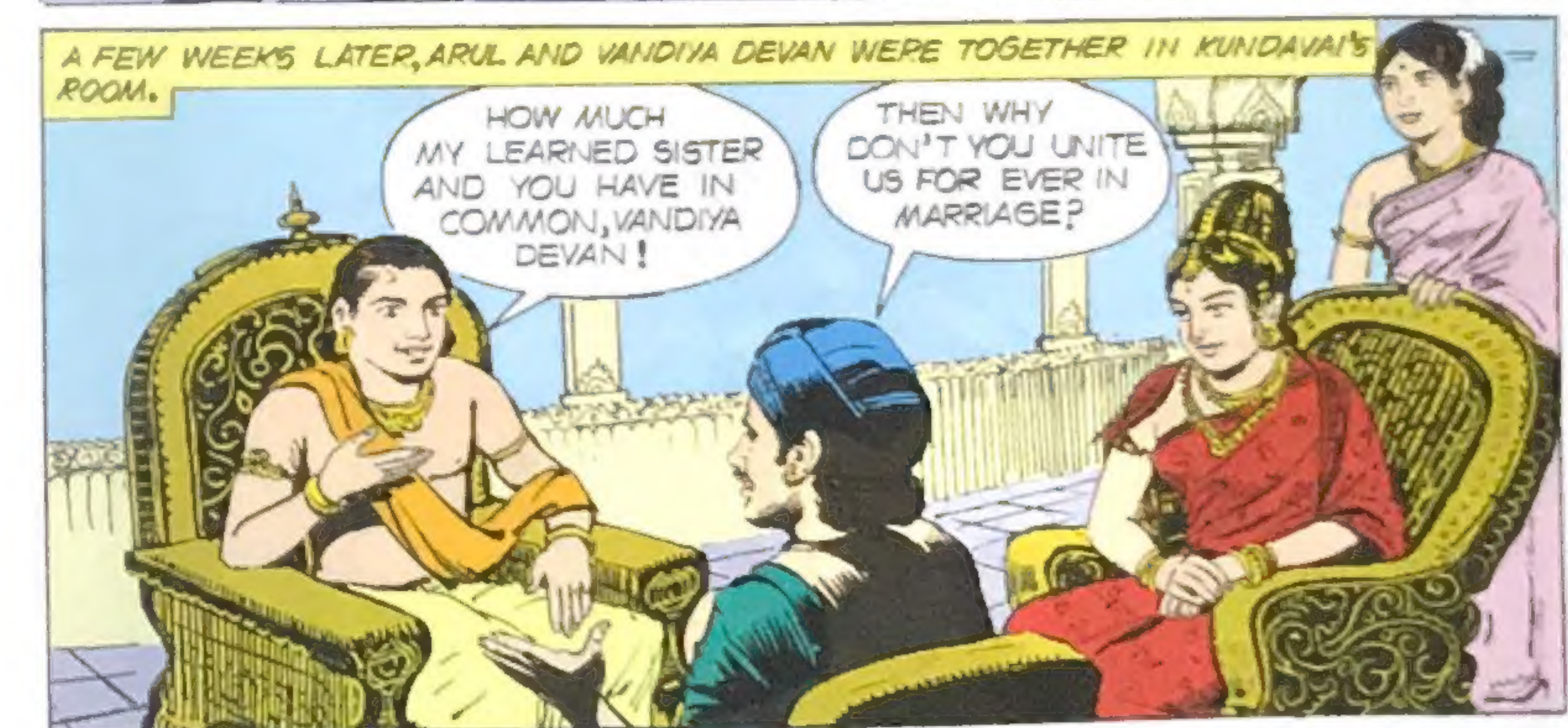
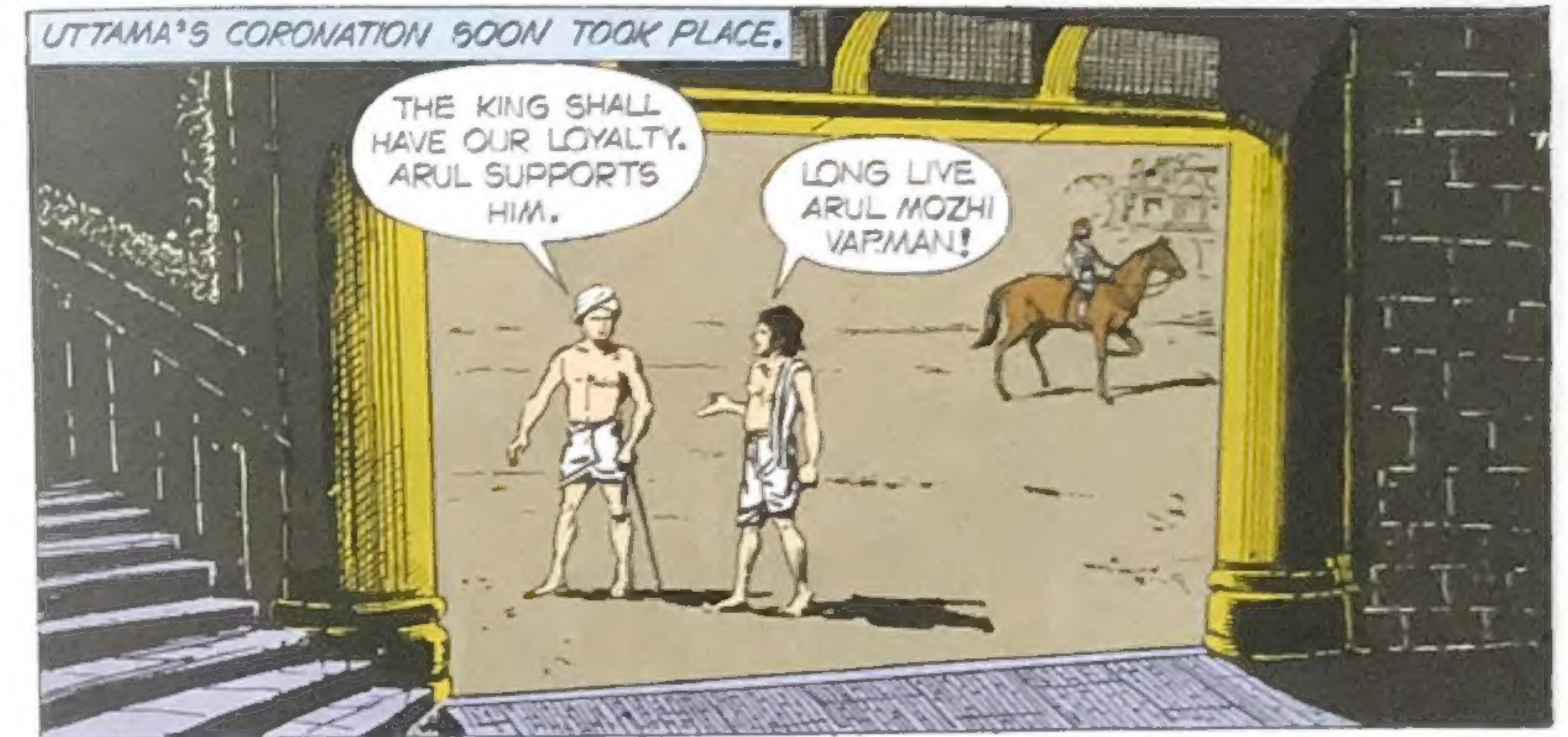
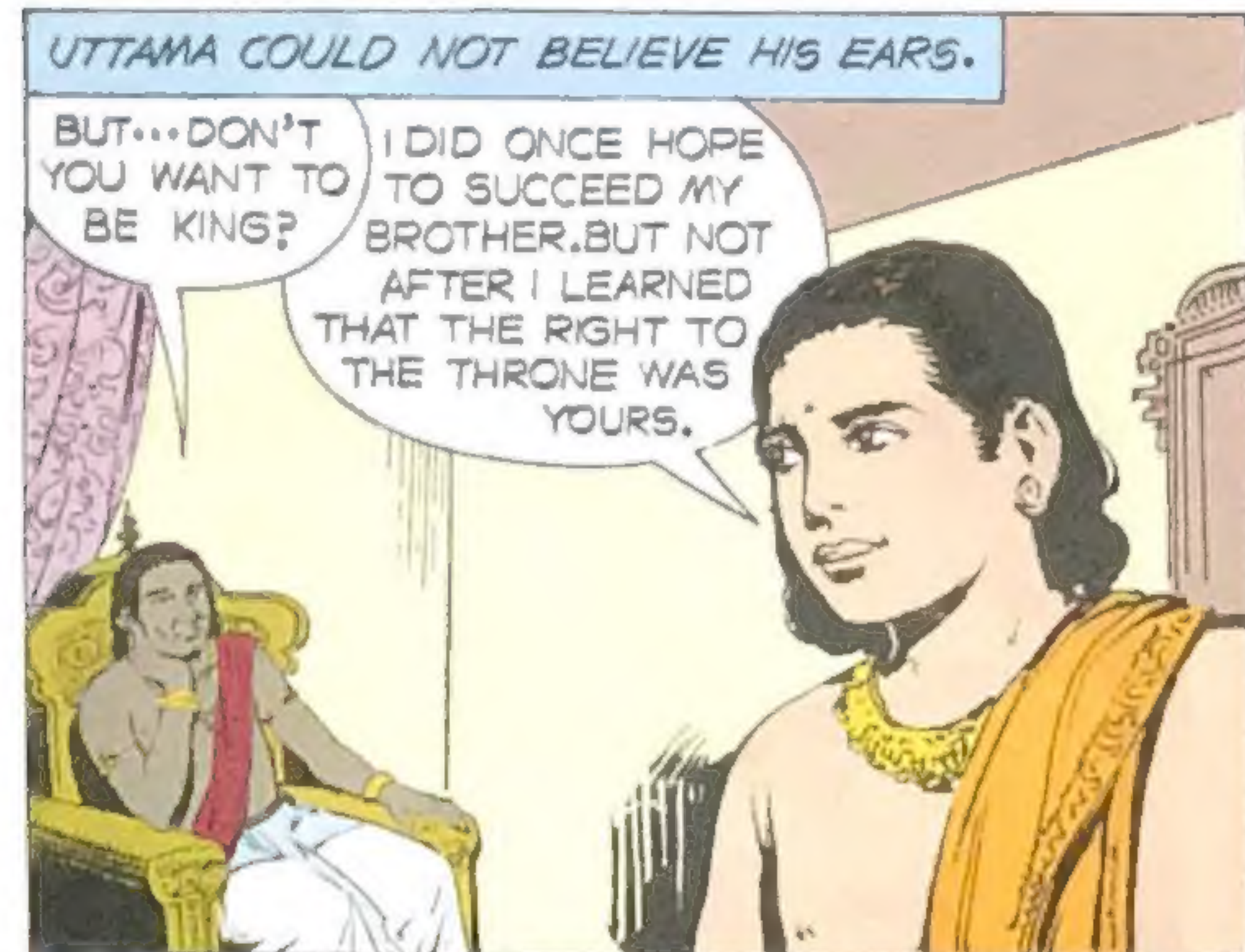
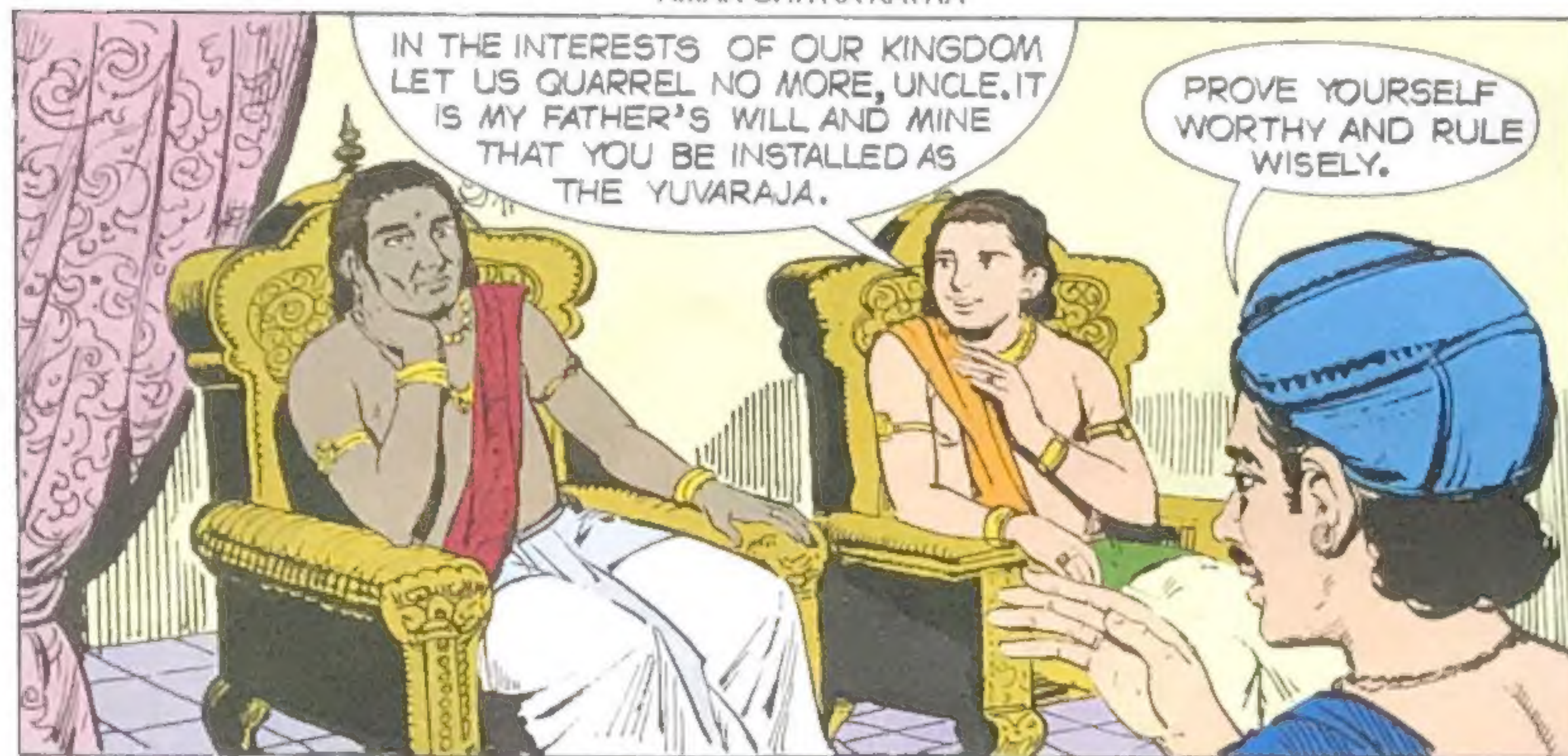
I KNEW I COULD COUNT ON YOU, MY NOBLE, DUTIFUL SON.

ARUL AND VANDIYA DEVAN LEFT PARANTAKA AND WENT TO SEE UTTAMA.



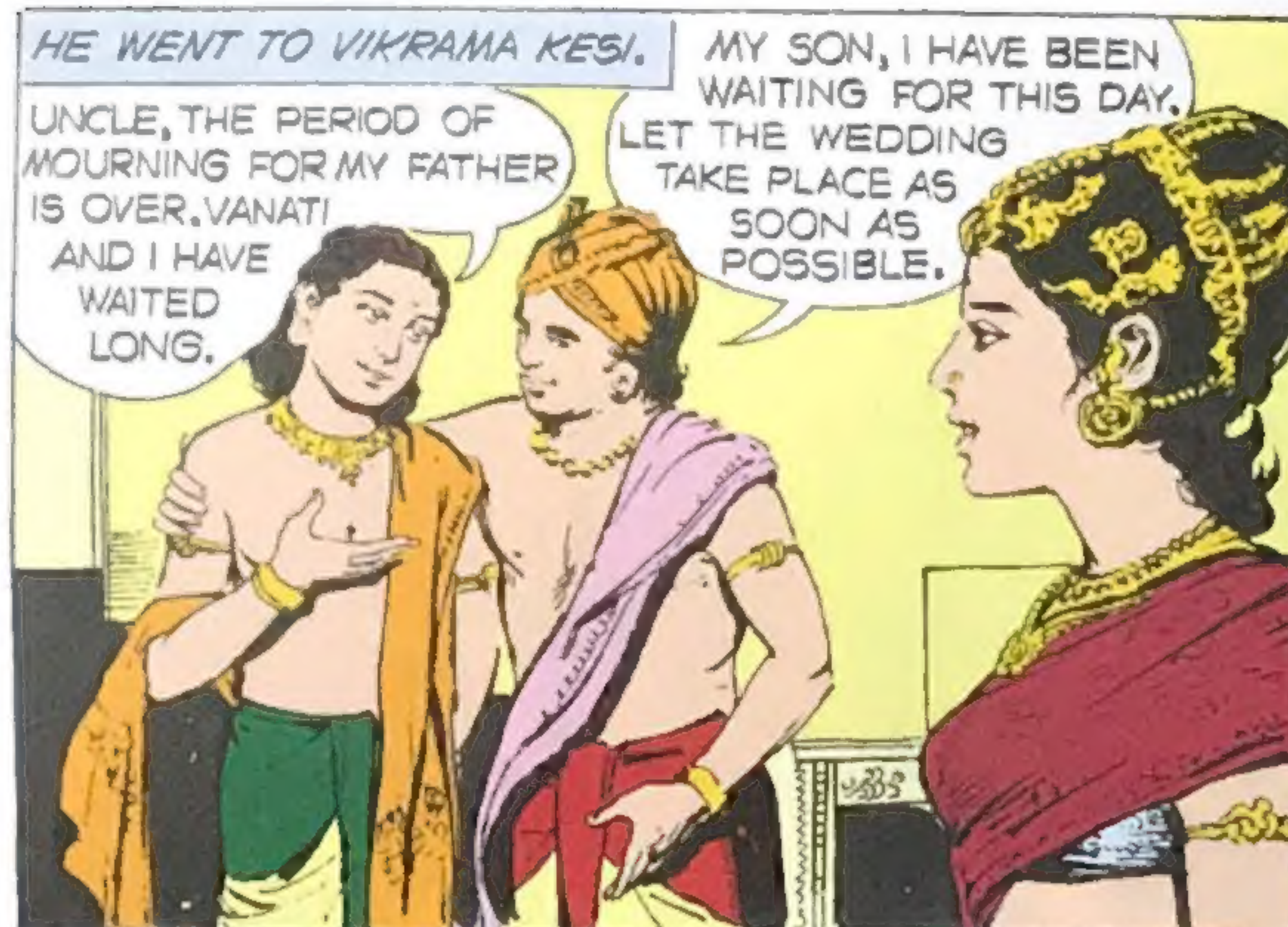
ARUL! VANDIYA DEVAN! YOU ARE BACK! B-BUT... I THOUGHT... I HEARD...

WHAT YOU HEARD WAS TRUE. OUR SHIP SANK. BUT WE SURVIVED.





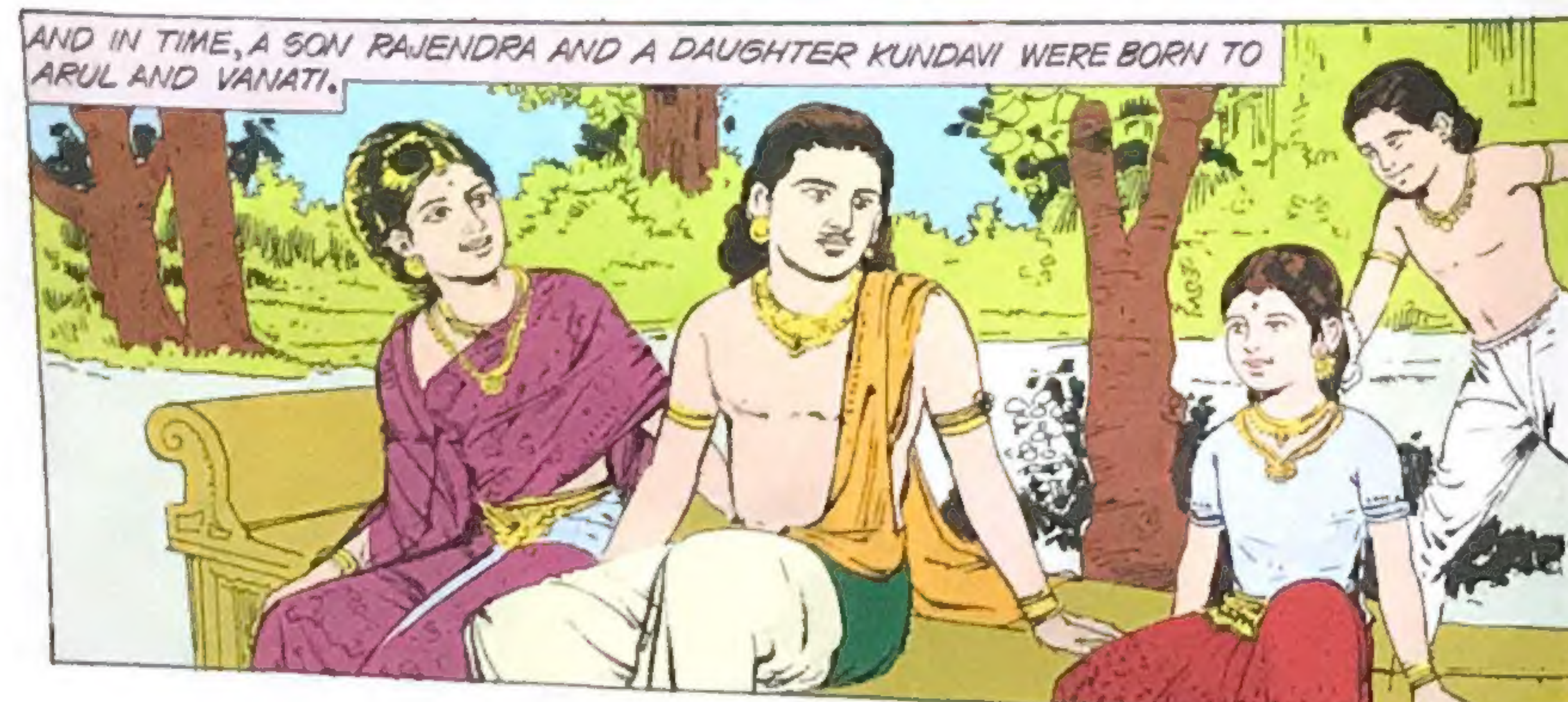
I, TOO, MUST NOT KEEP VANATI WAITING ANY LONGER.



UNCLE, THE PERIOD OF MOURNING FOR MY FATHER IS OVER, VANATI AND I HAVE WAITED LONG.

MY SON, I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS DAY. LET THE WEDDING TAKE PLACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

THE WEDDING OF ARUL TO VANATI AND KUNDAVAI TO VANDIYA DEVAN WERE PERFORMED ON THE SAME DAY.



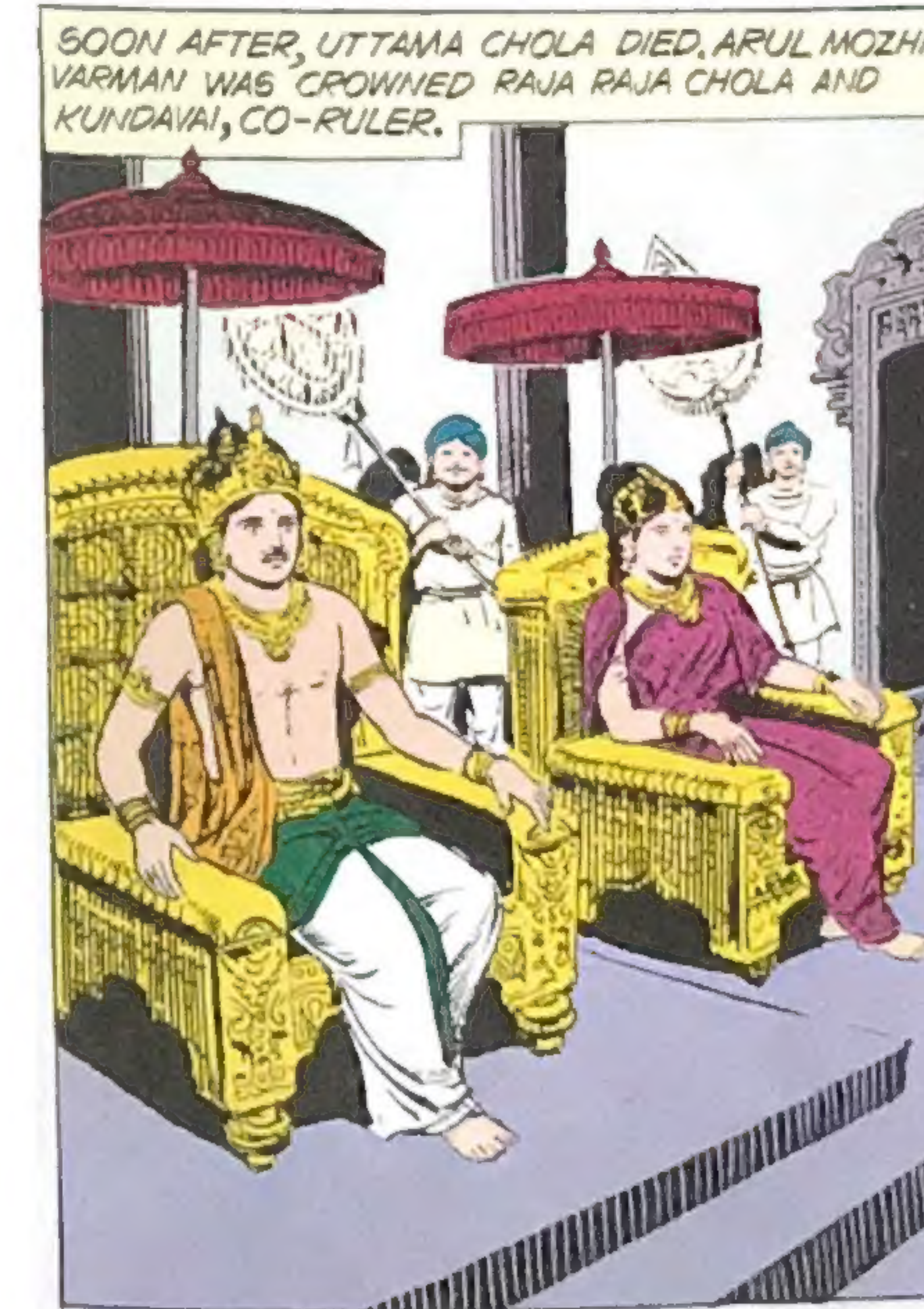
SIR, THE KING IS VERY ILL AND WISHES TO SEE YOU.

I SHALL COME AT ONCE.

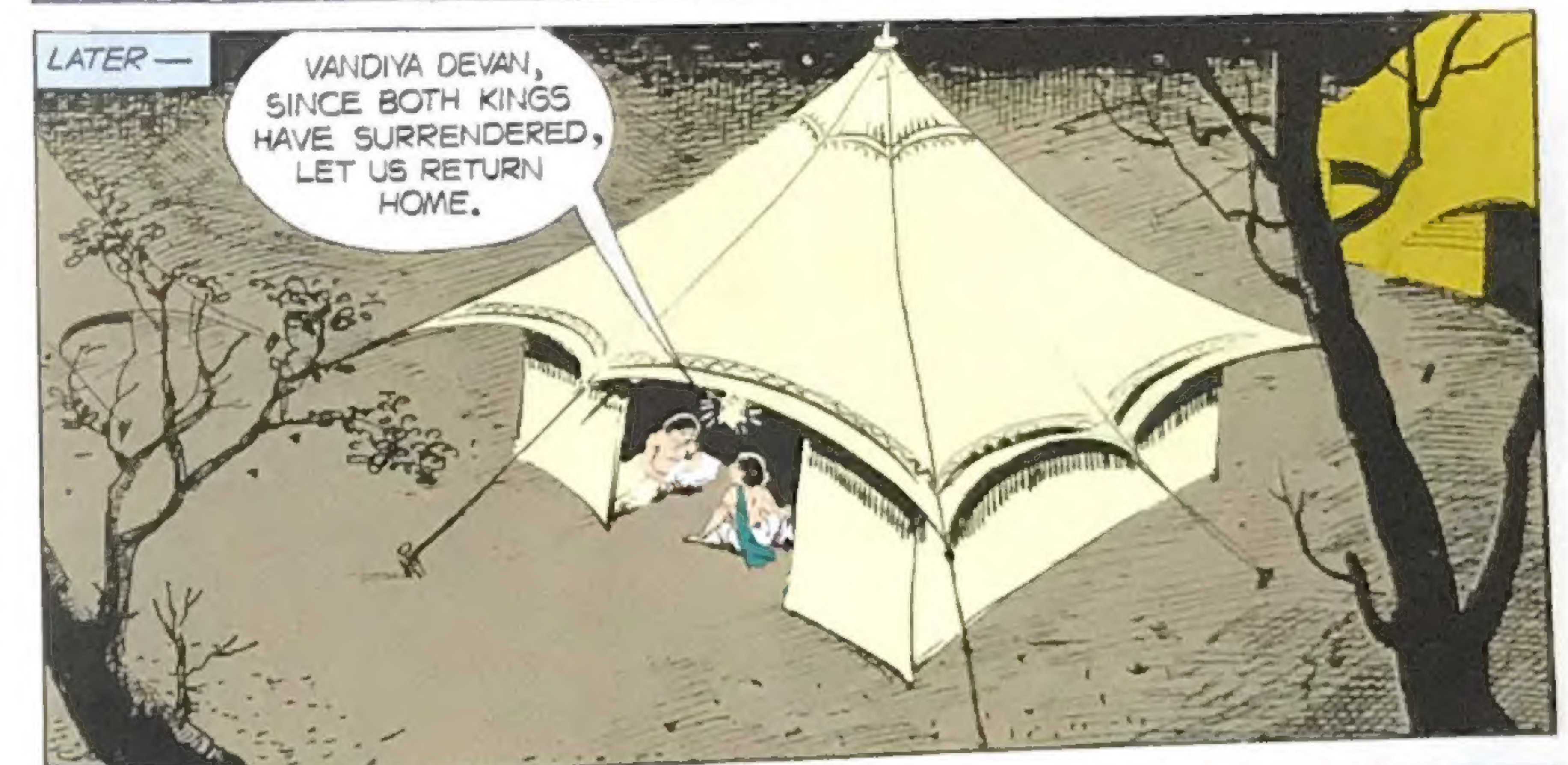
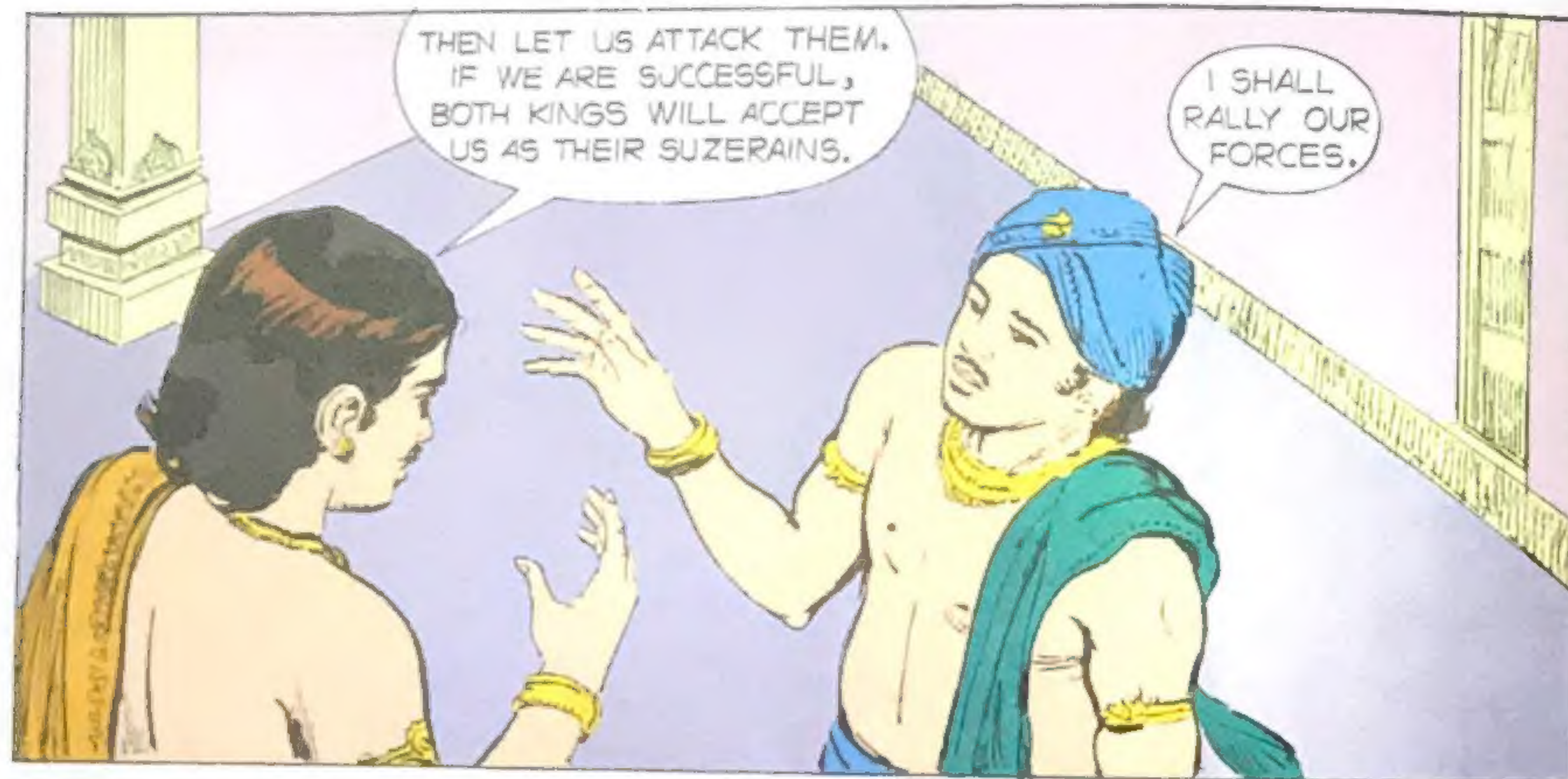


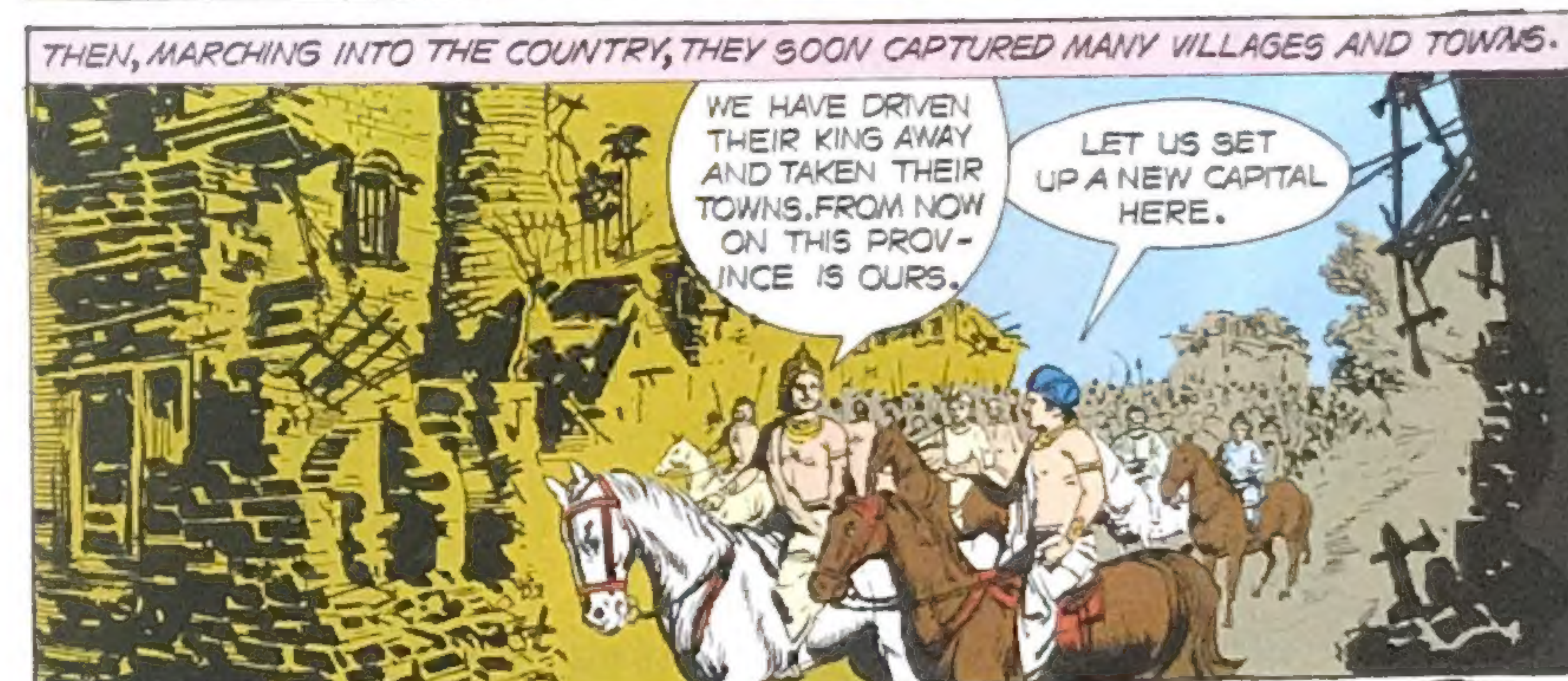
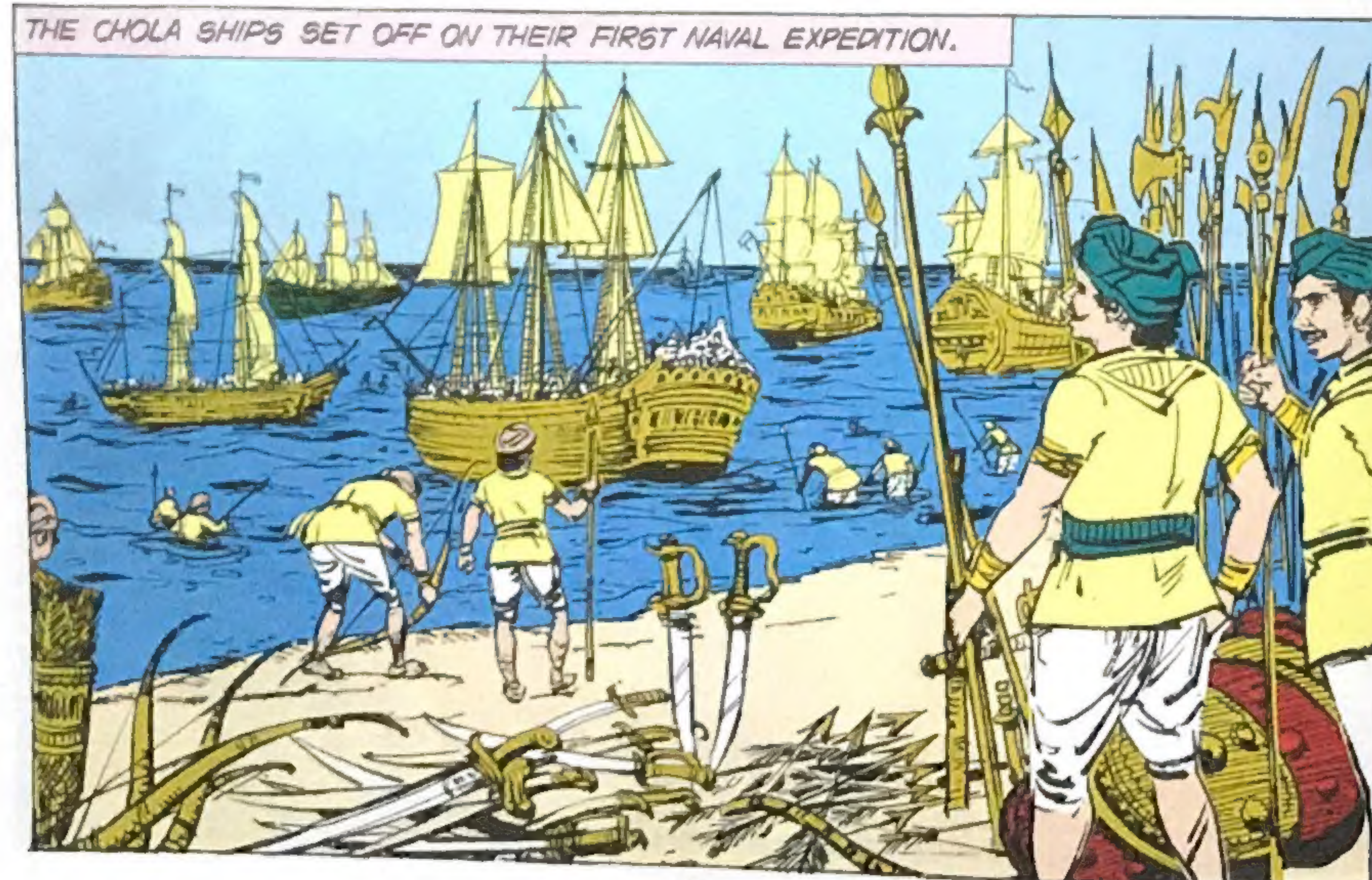
I AM DYING AND HAVE NO STRENGTH, I WANT TO TELL YOU THAT I AM INDEBTED TO YOU. YOU WILL MAKE A BETTER KING THAN I HAVE BEEN.

HUSH, UNCLE, YOU MUST NOT TIRE YOURSELF.



OUR SPIES TELL US THAT THE WEAK KING OF MADURAI IS ONCE AGAIN IN ARMS AGAINST US, THIS TIME IN LEAGUE WITH THE CHERA KING.





AS THE YEARS ROLLED ON RAJA RAJA CHOLA'S PRESTIGE AS A POWERFUL BUT JUST RULER GREW. HIS ENEMIES HE QUELLED. THOSE WHO SOUGHT ASYLUM WITH HIM DID NOT DO SO IN VAIN. SUCH WAS THE REIGN OF RAJA RAJA CHOLA THE GREAT.